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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INFORMATION FLOW

PROCESS OF SCHOOL BOARDS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into one aspect of
school board decision-making, namely the flow of information to board
members. Both the nature and extent of pre-meeting preparation as well
as the flow of information and opinion during the meeting were investi-
gated. The source from which the information came and the operational
area into which the information was presented were also studied.

The sample consisted of the boards of four districts; each district
was a different size. A town district serving 1200 students, a county
serving 2300 students, a small urban district serving 6200, and a large
urban district serving over 60,000 students made up the sample.

Data for the study were collected by two methods. The data on
general board operation and pre-meeting preparation were collected by
the investigator visiting each school board office and interviewing
the superintendent using a questionnaire as a guide. Data on the flow
of information and opinion to board members during the meeting were
obtained from previously recorded tapes. These latter data were trans-
formed into percentages and patterns of information and opinion were
obtained for: (1) each district by source, (2) each source within a
district, (3) each district by operational area, and (4) each opera-
tional area within a district.

The amount of time spent in meetings by the participating boards
was not directly related to size since the average time spent per month
was 6.6 hours for the county, 8.5 hours for the large urban district,
9.25 hours for the small urban district, and 10.6 hours for the town

district. The use of committees was extensive in the town district and the small urban district.

While all administrations were making a deliberate effort to prepare trustees for meetings, the administration of the large urban district was performing best in this respect. The trustees in this district received the minutes of the previous meeting, the agenda of the forthcoming meeting, the administrative staff memorandum, and keyed enclosures.

This study revealed that the three most important sources of information during board meetings in order of importance were the superintendents, the secretary-treasurers, and the chairmen while the three most important sources of opinion in order of importance were the board members, the chairmen, and the superintendent.

Although each source had a different pattern of information and opinion, the operational areas that received the most information and opinion from all sources combined were staff personnel and buildings, property, and maintenance. Those areas that received the least information and opinion from all sources combined were pupil personnel and transportation.

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THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Decision-making has become generally recognized as the heart of the
administrative process in the last three decades. Barnard (1938) was
one of the first writers to acknowledge that decision-making was the
essential process of organizational action (Ch. XIII). The centrality
of the decision-making process in administration was also stressed by
McCamy when he said that:

> The reaching of a decision is the core of administration;
> all other attributes of the administrative process being
> dependent on, interwoven with, and existent for decision-
> making (p. 41).

Griffiths (1959) elaborates further on the importance of the decision-
making function and its relationship to other administrative functions:

> It is not only central in the sense that it is more
> important than the other functions, as some writers
> have indicated; it is also central in that all other
> functions of administration can best be interpreted
> in terms of the decision-making process (pp. 74-75).

More specifically about the importance of the decision-making of school
boards, Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee (1965) state that ". . . the
decisions made by school boards are the fiber of local government
(p. 164)." Thus, many authors argue that the making of decisions is
the center of the process of administration and that any discussion of
administration is more systematic if discussed from this point of view.

The quality of decisions taken by any deliberative body such as a
school board is affected by the amount of information which is available

to the decision-makers (Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, 1965, p. 180).
This was emphasized by Maertz (1966) who said that: "Sound decision-
making is possible only when all information pertaining to the issue
at stake is made available and is understood (p. 106)." Because there
is a limit to man's rationality, he is unable to single-handedly con-
ceive of a sufficient number of alternative courses of action and their
consequences to insure consistently high-quality decisions (Simon,
1961, pp. 80-81). To compensate for man's incompleteness of knowledge,
one limitation on his rationality, an adequate flow of information to
the decision-maker is necessary (Simon, 1961, pp. 81-83). Thus, the
adequacy of the information available to the decision-makers can affect
the quality of the decisions taken by a school board which in turn can
affect the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the school system.

II. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate one aspect of school
board decision-making, namely the flow of information to board members.
Specificially, there was a two-fold purpose: (1) to determine the nature
and extent of pre-meeting preparation, and (2) to determine the extent
of information and opinion brought to bear on decisions taken at board
meetings.

Sub-Problems

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the extent of distribution to board members of each
of the following informational documents prior to board meetings?

    (a) the minutes of the previous meeting

    (b) the current financial statement

    (c) a list of accounts payable

    (d) the agenda of the forthcoming meeting

    (e) the administrative staff memorandum

    (f) keyed enclosures

2. What is the extent of information supplied in all operational areas together and in each operational area separately by each of the following sources during the meeting?

    (a) pre-meeting documents

    (b) the superintendent

    (c) the secretary-treasurer

    (d) the chairman

    (e) board committees

    (f) individual board members

    (g) all other sources

3. What is the extent of opinion supplied in all operational areas together and in each operational area separately by each of the following sources during the meeting?

    (a) the superintendent

    (b) the secretary-treasurer

    (c) the chairman

    (d) individual board members

    (e) all other sources

4. What is the distribution of information and opinion by all sources together and each source separately among the following operational areas?

    (a) staff personnel

    (b) pupil personnel

    (c) instructional program

    (d) business management and accounting

    (e) buildings, property, and maintenance

    (f) transportation

    (g) school board matters

Importance of the Study

The increasing demands of society for more diversified programs of education for greater numbers of students have placed school boards in positions of strategic importance with respect to the provision of education. The decisions which they take have both immediate and far-reaching consequences for individuals as well as the nation as a whole. Furthermore, the educational programs initiated by school board decisions cost the taxpayers of the province millions of dollars annually. Since it is only at the school board meeting that trustees can discharge their responsibilities for the provision of education, the board meeting takes on great significance in the administration of education. It is, therefore, advisable to look at school boards as decision-making bodies in an attempt to discover how they operate in this respect.

Since superior decision-making depends upon the adequacy of information available to the decision-makers, it was felt that a study of flow of information to school boards should be useful to boards in discovering and overcoming deficiencies with respect to this aspect of decision-making. Furthermore, the findings could be of assistance in defining a more workable relationship between school boards and their superintendents,

a problem previously revealed in studies by Collins (1958) and Finlay
(1961). The anticipated outcome of a study of the information flow
process would be improvement in the educational program brought
about by better decision-making practices.

Delimitation of the Study

This study of the flow of information and opinion to and within a
school board was limited to two meetings per board of four Alberta
school boards.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited by the ability of the investigator to
accurately and consistently distinguish between information and opinion
while classifying comments of administrators and school board members.

2. Since only the data respecting the in-meeting procedure was
collected approximately one year ago, the accuracy of the data on
pre-meeting preparation depended upon the ability of the respondents
to recall exactly what this procedure was at that time or upon the
adequacy of information in their files.

3. The study is limited by the fact that the discussion taking
place at board meetings is not necessarily all of the discussion which
takes place respecting agenda items.

4. A final factor which limited the generalizability was that the
percentage of information and opinion given by each source during only
two meetings may not be representative of the amount of information
given by sources during meetings throughout the year.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Information Statement

A statement which quotes from such documents as the Department of Education regulations, the School Act, local policies or regulations, or statistics and facts from other reports, documents, or sources.

Opinion Statement

An expression of a personal view, preference, attitude, or judgment that rests on grounds insufficient to produce certainty. Typically, these statements are preceded with such phrases as "I think", "I believe", or "I feel".

Operational Areas

This study divides school administration into seven operational areas. They include: (1) staff personnel, (2) pupil personnel, (3) instructional programs, (4) business management and accounting, (5) buildings, property, and maintenance, (6) transportation, and (7) school board matters.

Information Pattern

The numerical distribution of information, according to operational area and according to the source of information, constitutes an information pattern.

Opinion Pattern

The numerical distribution of opinion, according to operational area and according to source, constitutes an opinion pattern.

Current Financial Statement

A report consisting of receipts and payments as well as a balance

sheet showing current net worth is referred to as the current financial statement.

Accounts Payable

The accounts payable is a record of sums currently due to creditors by the school district.

Agenda

The agenda is a list of items to be acted upon at a meeting of the school board.

Administrative Staff Memorandum

A document keyed to the agenda presenting the administration's thinking, alternative courses of action, and recommended courses of action on agenda items of a forthcoming meeting constitutes the administrative staff memorandum.

Keyed Enclosures

These include such informational items as reports and letters, keyed to the agenda, giving the background information on which the administration's recommendations are based.

Professional Sources

The professional sources of information or opinion include the pre-meeting documents, the superintendent, and the secretary-treasurer.

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CHAPTER II

THE FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL BOARD DECISION-MAKING

Responsibility for the provision of education in Canada was assigned to the provincial legislatures by the British North America Act. The provinces, being free to establish the kind of educational system they wished, chose to establish a system which was partly centralized and partly decentralized. To administer the decentralized functions local school districts were created, and authority was granted to them by the School Acts of the provincial legislatures to make certain decisions, although ultimate responsibility for education still remained with the provincial government (Enns, 1963, pp. 4-5).

I. POWERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS

General Powers

The authority of a school board lies in the board as a quasi-corporate body (Enns, 1963, pp. 36-37). The corporation exists apart from the individuals which comprise it and its existence is perpetual even though its membership may change. Only those powers conferred upon it by its creating statute, The School Act, can be exercised. As Enns and Sparby indicate, "School boards, as creatures of the legislature, can operate only within the powers delegated to them and may not exceed their jurisdiction (1962, p. 13)." Furthermore any action to be legally binding must be taken at a properly constituted meeting of the whole board (Enns, 1963, p. 48). Acts of individual trustees or those of a committee are not acts of the corporation as a body and therefore, are not legally binding.

Mandatory and Discretionary Powers

Some powers which have been delegated by the legislature to its local agents are mandatory and therefore, must be exercised (Enns, 1963, p. 54). Examples of some of the more significant of these powers are:

1. The board shall provide adequate instructional facilities for pupils who have attained the full age of six years by the first day of September of any school year . . . (Department of Education, 1966, sec. 177 (c), p. 59).

2. The board shall employ duly qualified teachers in the school or schools in its charge and shall designate the school or room in which each of its teachers will teach (Department of Education, 1966, sec. 330, p. 116).

3. The board shall provide adequate school accommodation for the purpose of the district or division . . . (Department of Education, 1966, sec. 222 (a), p. 78).

Although a school board must exercise these mandatory obligations as an agency of the legislature, the manner in which they exercise the obligations leaves them substantial discretion. For example, even though the act explicitly states that a board must employ qualified teachers, it can exercise discretion with respect to the qualifications beyond a minimum of teachers employed, salaries paid, and the number of teachers employed.

Other powers in The School Act, termed discretionary or permissive powers, may or may not be exercised by the school board. Therefore, the board decides both whether it wishes to exercise the power and if it chooses to do so, the manner by which the power is to be exercised. Pertinent examples of discretionary powers are:

1. The board may furnish the pupils with textbooks, exercise books, pens, pencils and others supplies . . . (Department of Education, 1966, sec. 178 (c), p. 60).

2. A board may dismiss a teacher summarily for gross misconduct, neglect of duty, or for refusal or neglect to obey any lawful order of the board (Department of Education, 1966, sec. 350 (1), p. 121).

3. The board may acquire or build residences, furnish any residence it has acquired or built and rent residences to a superintendent, teacher, or other employee of the board . . . (Department of Education, 1966, sec. 223 (b), p. 78).

II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT

Prior to the formation of larger units of administration in Alberta in 1936, the provincially-appointed inspectors were almost exclusively associated with the functions of the central department, particularly the administration of the centrally-formulated curriculum and the inspection of teachers. Since the inspector had many schools within his jurisdiction, rarely did he attend board meetings and seldom did he perform executive functions for the board. Thus, during this period the administration of a school district's affairs was carried out by the board of trustees and their secretary-treasurer, who was often one of the board members. The functions of the board were simple at this time, consisting mainly of hiring teachers and providing and maintaining school buildings. Regardless of the simplicity of the tasks, the board acted in an executive as well as a legislative capacity and the secretary-treasurer became a very influential person in the operation of a school district.

With the formation of the school divisions, the board was obliged to hire a secretary-treasurer (Department of Education, 1955, Ch. 291, Sec. 173 (2) (a)), and the area inspector was assigned to a school

division as a superintendent (Reeves, 1955, pp. 50-51). Although

changes were made in The School Act to enlarge the responsibilities

of the superintendent, many school boards continued to expect only

the traditional role from the superintendent, mainly that of

administering provincial curricula and inspecting teachers (Flower &

Stewart, 1958, pp. 139-140). Likewise, the expectations the board

held for the person they employed as secretary-treasurer tended to

be similar to expectations previously held for secretary-treasurers.

As a result the secretary-treasurer continued to perform duties beyond

those listed in The School Act, often including that of executive

officers of the board. Consequently, the dual-type of leadership

characteristic of the pre-division era has been perpetuated in many

instances. Its nature has been revealed by Finlay (1961) who found that

the superintendent has been given responsibility for the administration

of the educational program while the secretary-treasurer is the business

administrator.

III. SUMMARY

Although the school board must operate within the statutory limits

set down by the provincial legislature through the school acts, it is

able to exercise considerable influence over the scope and quality of

the educational program by virtue of the discretion it can exercise

with respect to both mandatory and discretionary powers. Two areas in

particular where board decisions can vastly influence the quality of

the educational product are the provision of facilities and the employ-

ment of instructional personnel. The decisions taken by the board in

these areas can make the difference between a superior and an inferior

program of education. One factor, however, which may be adversely

affecting the decision-making process of school boards is the lack of

a unitary executive organization. Collins (1960) suggests:

> . . . the effectiveness of their work [the superintendent
> and secretary-treasurer] and the efficiency of the local
> school system were suffering because of the conflicts
> inherent in the legitimate expectations of the various
> groups (p. 40).

The conflict between the superintendent and secretary-treasurer may be

impeding the flow of information to the board and in this manner may

be hindering sound decision-making.

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CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

The importance of the influence which boards have over the educational
system may be inferred from the amount the professional literature has
to say about the conduct of the general affairs of a board. The fact
that it is only at board meetings that trustees can discharge their
responsibility for public education has focused many writers' attention
upon one aspect of board affairs, namely the conduct of board meetings.
Both of these aspects, general board operations and the conduct of
board meetings, will be dealt with in this review.

I. THE SCHOOL BOARD AS A POLICY-MAKING BODY

With respect to the general administration of organizations Castetter
(1962) says:

> There are two ways to administer any organization of human
> effort--by policy or by expediency. Experience has shown
> that there are distinct advantages in solving day-to-day
> problems and long-term problems by adherence to policy
> rather than to expedient action in response to complaints,
> pressures, or embarrassing comparisons (pp. 34-35).

Most writers in school administration would agree that the primary func-
tions of a school board is that of policy-formulation. Tuttle (1958)
says, for example, ". . . the function of a school board is to establish
policies for the operation of the school system . . . (p. 37)" while
Cubberly (1922) says:

> The board's work, as the representative of the people, is
> to sit in judgment on proposals, to determine the general
> policy of the school system, and to see that the policies
> decided upon are carried out by the superintendent and
> his staff (p. 206).

While Tuttle (1958) indicates that a lack of policies is ". . . a major handicap to effective school board operation (p. 39)," a number of more specific reasons for policy-making can be enumerated. One of the more obvious ones is that many decisions cannot wait for action until a formal board meeting. Therefore, if a board desires to retain control over the decisions which are thus made, it should formulate policy which will serve as guides to preferred courses of action within which the administrator can use discretion in making his decisions. As one leading authority puts it:

> A Board of Education cannot make all the decisions for
> governing the school system. . . . At best the Board of
> Education can make only a few decisions. Because the
> control of the school system is in the hands of the people
> that make the large policy decisions, a Board of Education
> which wishes to be in control must of necessity, become a
> policy-making body. The few decisions which it is able to
> make must be policy decisions--that is "guides for discretionary
> action" and leave the execution of those decisions to the
> trained professional administrator who has the background
> experience and skill which Board members lack (Brickell, 1961,
> p. 22).

The existence of policy will also reduce the hesitancy and inconsistency on the part of the administrator since he is never quite sure whether his decisions will result in censure or approval.

The American Association of School Administrators (1955) points out that policies contribute to a school system's effectiveness by: (1) clarifying responsibility between the board, administrative staff, and teachers; (2) fostering consistency and stability of board action; (3) saving time and effort by eliminating the necessity of having to make a decision every time a recurring situation develops; (4) giving the board a sense of direction; (5) facilitating orderly review of

board practices; (6) helping in the orientation of new board and staff members; (7) insuring a better informed board and staff; and (8) facilitating the improvement of staff morale by providing uniform treatment (pp. 8-9).

Although the professional literature frequently indicates that policy-formulation falls within the domain of the board and that the execution of policy is the responsibility of the superintendent, operationally policy-formulation and implementation are not that separable, and call for a high degree of cooperation between the board and superintendent (Griffiths, 1962, pp. 159-160). Likewise Appleby (1949) suggests that policy-formulation and execution are closely interrelated when he says: "The function of policy-making cannot actually be vested at any one point or level in a government (p. 20)." Thus, the role of the administrator in relation to the role of the board can be summed up as follows:

> Not only does the administrator help the board to understand the importance of, and the necessity for, policy formulation, he is also the key administrative agent in bringing to the board's attention the need for new, or the revision of existing, policies. He helps to define the problems, suggests alternatives, furnishes appropriate information which will enable board members to understand the problems and implications of several alternative courses of action, advises on the appropriateness of each alternative, and shares with the board the task of policy appraisal (Castetter, 1962, p. 39).

II. THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Since the decision-making process is the central process in administration, a complete description of the process is in order. The steps for arriving at a rational policy decision, detailed by Castetter (1962, pp. 38-42), Griffiths (1959, pp. 92-113), or Campbell, Cunningham, and

McPhee (1965, pp. 178-182), are representative of what the literature

has to say about group decision-making.

They recognize that the first step in the process is the identifi-

cation and careful definition of the problem. The difficulty encountered

in identifying and defining the problem is that each person in the

group perceives the problem differently as a result of his dominant

personal values (Campbell, Cunningham & McPhee, 1965, p. 179). However,

as a result of these differing perceptions, the group will be better

able to see the totality of the problem. Griffiths (1959) indicates

that the next stage is the setting of criteria or standards by which

alternatives are judged (pp. 102-103). The third step is a deliberative

stage in which alternative solutions and their consequences are con-

sidered against the previously set standards or criteria. The influences

at work at this stage are outlined by Campbell, Cunningham & McPhee (1965):

> Behavior of a board member is obviously conditioned by
> the values he holds, but another essential determinant
> is the information available to him as a basis for his
> deliberations. The number and range of possible policy
> or decision alternatives which a board considers is
> dependent upon the amount of information, the capacities
> of the board members to assimilate and evaluate information,
> and the richness of communication among board members,
> board member cliques, and school administrators. Infor-
> mation is brought to the school board orally and in
> writing. . . . The school superintendent is the key
> figure in the analysis of the information component of
> school board deliberations (pp. 180-181).

The fourth stage involves the selection and implementation of one

alternative, after having weighed the consequences of each. Finally,

the consequences resulting from implementation of the new policy are

evaluated and the policy may be left as it is, revised or discarded,

depending on its contribution to the goal attainment of the system.

III. PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF BOARD OPERATION

Pre-meeting Preparation

The multiplicity of complex problems facing modern-day school boards and the relatively little time available for meetings dictate the wise use of meeting time. Swift (1959), who surveyed a number of Alberta school districts, revealed the following important weaknesses in the conduct of board meetings:

1. discussion is too dispersed and rambling.

2. delegations take too long--many are unnecessary.

3. items are added to the agenda after it has been prepared, or items are brought in during the meeting.

4. too much time is spent in reading accounts, and

5. a general criticism was that it took too long to cover the amount of business to be transacted (pp. 5-6).

The literature outlines a number of ways of overcoming these as well as other deficiencies.

Although many factors influence the success of board deliberations, the adequacy of preparation of both the superintendents and the trustees for the board meeting has often been cited as a prime factor by writers on school administration. Writers such as White (1962) recommend the preparation and distribution of the following to board members prior to the meeting:

(1) meeting agenda, (2) minutes of the previous board meeting, (3) current financial statement, (4) list of accounts payable, and (5) background information on matters to be discussed at the forthcoming meeting (p. 59).

The responsibility for the preparation of the agenda and other materials, according to Knezevich (1962, pp. 228-229) and James (1961, p. 15), should be assigned to the superintendent. Andrews (1961, p. 48) indicates that the day before sending materials out should be considered the deadline for receiving agenda items and no items should be added after that since boards will have both inadequate information and insufficient time to consider the matter. He also recommends that materials should reach the board members at least two or three days before the meeting. This will provide time for trustees to study the materials and thus do away with the need for a time-consuming oral presentation during the meeting.

The advantages which accrue to preparing board members in advance of the meeting are enumerated by White (1962):

> Such advance information gives board members an opportunity to study problems prior to the board meeting, reduces the amount of time required for routine duties, and allows the meeting to proceed in an orderly manner without lost motion (p. 59).

Thus, the pre-meeting preparation can go a long way toward correcting many of the previously-mentioned deficiencies as well as improving the quality of decisions which are made.

The Davies-Brickell Design for Board Meetings

Pre-meeting preparation. Manuals prepared by Davies and Brickell (1958) on the conduct of board meetings have generated considerable interest. According to their plan the pre-meeting phase involves the preparation and distribution by the superintendent and his staff of three types of materials: (1) the meeting agenda, (2) the administrative staff memorandum, and (3) several types of keyed enclosures (pp. 6-7).

All of this material should reach the trustee soon enough to allow him

sufficient time to study it before the meeting.

The type of agenda proposed by Davies and Brickell differs

considerably from the classical meeting agenda. The type of agenda

familiar to most is as follows:

1. Approval of minutes.

2. Receiving delegations.

3. Reading communications.

4. Unfinished business.

5. Payment of claims.

6. Report of superintendent and staff.

7. Report of special committees.

8. New business.

9. Adjournment.

(Wahlquist, Arnold, Campbell, Reller & Sands, 1952, p. 146).

The agenda proposed by Davies and Brickell consists of two main sub-

divisions (pp. 7-12). Action items, including old and new business, come

first following routine matters such as the approval of the minutes.

These are items on which trustees have received recommendations and

information prior to the meeting and on which they must make a decision.

By having action items during the early part of the meeting they can be

dealt with before the trustees become tired. The second major subdivision,

the non-action items, which include hearing delegations, questioning the

administration, and hearing non-staff reports or reports previously

requested by the board, follows the action items.[1] From this general

_____

[1]For a complete outline of the Davies-Brickell agenda see Appendix C.

exchange of information in the latter part of the meeting will come

action items for future meetings after the administration has had

time to gather information and prepare recommendations.

The administrative staff memorandum, which is keyed to the agenda,

". . . gives the administration's thinking, mentions alternatives,

suggests specific actions, offers 'canned' motions which the board

can pass quickly or amend (p. 6)." Recommendations are stated in

language which can be readily incorporated into motions (p. 14).

While the board is still free to act on the recommendations as it

wishes, this procedure gives trustees time to evaluate the course

of action suggested by the administration. Furthermore, the recom-

mendations help to focus the discussion on possible solutions and

thus expedite board action on the items.

The enclosures, also keyed to the agenda, are a variety of materials

such as reports and letters, which are of two types: (1) those that

contain information for the board, and (2) those that contain information

on which recommendations are based. Some go out regularly while others

go out only as required.

The use of this mechanical set of procedures helps to establish a

workable relationship between the board and the administration (Kratzmann,

1965, p. 33). Each has a major role to play in the decision-making

process. The administration supplies the information while the boards

"act as a committee-of-the-whole to question the facts and appraise

the recommendations (Wahlquist et al., 1952, p. 133)." Furthermore,

this set of procedures does away with the necessity of standing committees,

a procedure which is questioned by Tuttle (1958) when he says:

> The greatest objection to standing committees is that in
> practice they tend to result in having several boards
> instead of one, both from the standpoint of the adminis-
> trator and his staff and from the standpoint of the
> public. . . . When fractions of the board specialize, so
> to speak, in particular areas of school operation, they
> soon come to look upon themselves as authorities and to
> infringe upon the administrative functions of the super-
> intendent and his staff instead of confining their
> activities to the making of policy (pp. 32-33).

James (1960) adds that:

> Critical study and free discussion may be discouraged if
> a small committee of the total board membership makes
> recommendations. Misunderstanding may result from the
> belief that the board is committed to accepting the
> subcommittee's recommendations (p. 14).

Although board committees were at one time necessary and useful, the

growing complexity of educational services requires the competence of

a trained administrator for fact-gathering and recommending functions.

In-meeting procedure. With the superintendent and trustees thus

prepared for the meeting, the agenda items can be discussed thoroughly

but without waste of time since the discussion will tend to be more

on the topic. Davies and Brickell (1958, p. 26) recommend that

materials sent out prior to the meeting should not be presented orally

during the meeting since it will not only consume time but it will

discourage board members from reading materials in advance. They also

suggest that there is no place for the classic 'superintendent's

report' since he should now be involved in all aspects of board operation

as their chief executive officer (p. 11). However, the superintendent

should offer advice and explanations during the meeting with respect to

the formal recommendations presented in the advance materials (Andrews,

1961, p. 49). The job of the trustees during the meeting will be to

question the basis of the recommendations made by the administration and present their collective views.

IV. RELATED RESEARCH

Various aspects of the operation of Alberta and other Canadian school boards have been investigated in other studies. Generally, however, the studies tend to be of two main types: (1) those which study different aspects of school board decision-making, and (2) those which investigate the relationship between the school board and its appointed officials.

School Board Decision-Making

A general survey which investigated all aspects of school board operation was conducted by Hastings (1966). He reported that only nineteen per cent of Alberta school boards were considered primarily policy-making bodies who left the execution of policies to their superintendent. Fifty-nine per cent of all superintendents reported that their boards make policies but reserve the right of execution of some of them while the remaining twenty-two per cent of the boards make few or no policy decisions (pp. 64-65).

On the matter of pre-meeting preparation, Hastings reported that only thirty-four per cent of boards receive advance information prior to the board meeting while sixty-four per cent receive the agenda and previous meeting's minutes (p. 93).

On the actual conduct of meetings he reports that only forty-eight per cent of all boards have an established and recorded order of business (pp. 93-94). Discussion during board meetings was found to be purposeful

and to the point forty per cent of the time (p. 93), a factor which may
be related to the fact that thirty-four per cent of boards received
advance information. Only fifty-nine per cent of boards word clearly
their motions before putting them in the minutes (p. 93).

A majority of boards (seventy-nine per cent) devote the major portion
of their meeting time to financial and business matters, nineteen per
cent devote as much time to the educational program as they do to
financial and business matters while only two per cent of all units
devote more time to educational matters (p. 101).

The use of committees was found to be more prevalent than recommended
in the literature. Seventy-six per cent of Alberta boards make use of
special committees while sixty-six per cent use standing committees (p.98).

Hasting's general conclusion was that: "School boards fall short
on most items necessary to the conduct of effective well-organized
business meetings (p. 93)."

A Saskatchewan study of three collegiate boards by McInnis (1962)
supported Hasting's findings. He concluded that policies guide only a
minor portion of the administration in these three systems while written
policies were non-existent (p. 139). Little of the executive function
was delegated to the administrators, particularly in the areas of
finance, business management, and plant maintenance, where it was
performed by standing committees (p. 139). Delegation, however, in the
areas of instructional program and personnel was high. According to
McInnis ". . . the major weakness displayed in the school systems under
observation was the extensive use of executive committees (p. 153)."

No pre-meeting preparation was observed. As a matter of fact,
only one of the boards used an agenda which had been prepared as a
guide for the chairman (p. 146). Most of the meeting time was devoted
to a discussion of matters related to finance, business management, and
plant maintenance with relatively little time being devoted to curri-
culum and instruction (p. 154). The greatest single fault displayed
during the conduct of the meetings was the excessive practice of
arriving at decisions by consensus rather than by voting on a formal
motion (p. 157).

Maertz (1966), who investigated the kinds of decisions made by
Alberta school boards, found that only slightly over three per cent of
all board decisions were policy decisions while fifty-seven per cent
were administrative in nature with the remaining forty per cent being
classified as housekeeping decisions (p. 120). He also found that as
a school system increased in size of enrolment school boards became
more active in formulating policy (pp. 121-122). Although he indicated
that one hundred twenty-seven policies were required in the sixteen
jurisdictions under investigation, he did not indicate the number of
adjudicative decisions that these would have negated. As would be
expected:

> The school system requiring the greatest number of policies
> [sic] made the greatest number of decisions during the year,
> while the school system requiring the least number of policies
> made the least number of decisions (p. 112).

Like McInnis he indicated that: "This study has confirmed that the
policy-making prerogative of school boards has not been exercised as a
viable method of fulfilling their responsibilities (p. 100)."

Decisions according to operational area were also calculated by this researcher (pp. 118-120). The greatest number of decisions were made in the areas of school board matters with twenty-six per cent, buildings, property, and maintenance with twenty-one per cent, and staff personnel with nineteen per cent while the least number of decisions were made in the area of pupil personnel with eight per cent and the instructional program with two-and-one-half per cent. This partly bears out McInnis' (1962) Saskatchewan finding which gave plant maintenance as one of the areas taking up most meeting time.

The findings of Cunningham (1962) and Keen (1965) in the United States were remarkably similar to those of Maertz. Cunningham found that policy decisions represented only eight per cent of all decisions while administrative decisions accounted for sixty per cent and housekeeping decisions made up the balance of thirty-two per cent. Keen, on whose study Maertz's was patterned, revealed that 3.1 per cent of all decisions were of a policy nature, 62.1 per cent were adjudicative, 7.5 per cent were ministerial, and 27.2 per cent were classified as miscellaneous. Since the two latter categories are the same as Maertz's category of housekeeping decisions, all of the findings are not markedly different.

The United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1962) conducted a nation-wide survey on school board operations. With respect to preparation for board meetings this survey revealed that 73.3 per cent of boards distribute the agenda prior to the meeting, 67.8 per cent distribute the minutes, 58.2 per cent distribute the current financial statement, 48.8 per cent distribute the accounts payable,

and 79.9 per cent distribute background information on agenda items
(pp. 59-60). Advance distribution of materials was more common as
the size of a school system increased (p. 60). On board organization
the authors of this survey reported that 30.1 per cent of school
systems used standing committees while 37.5 per cent used special
committees (p. 41). These findings are quite different from those of
Hastings' Alberta study in which only thirty-four per cent of boards
received background information on agenda items and considerably more
use was made of special and standing committees. Seventy-six per
cent of boards used special committees while sixty-six per cent used
standing committees. Apparently, more American boards are heeding
the advice of the authorities on some aspects of the operation of school
boards.

Relationship Between Trustees and Officials

In an Alberta study of school board expectations for the role of
provincially-appointed superintendents, Finlay (1961) concluded that
boards like to consider themselves administrators rather than simply
legislators or policy-makers (p. 106). As a result, in areas where
they feel capable they hold few expectations for the role of the
superintendent. Thus, boards grant the superintendent full and
unquestioned authority over the instructional program (p. 101). The
superintendent is also expected, subject to board approval, to select,
allocate and supervise the professional personnel (p. 101). On the
other hand, they expect him to exercise very little supervision over
non-professional personnel (p. 101). With respect to the provision
and maintenance of facilities (p. 103), only an advisory role is

expected while in the area of finance very little is expected of the superintendent (pp. 103-104).

These findings were supported by Matson's (1964) study of conflict between superintendents and secretary-treasurers. In areas such as the instructional program which were traditionally in the domain of the superintendent little conflict was evident. However, in the areas of finance, provision of facilities, and administrative organization, which were dominated traditionally by the board and the secretary-treasurer but which the authorities recommend should be in the jurisdication of the superintendent, there was considerable conflict (pp. 74-79).

V. SUMMARY

According to the literature a model school board should operate in the following manner:

1. Primarily the board should be a policy-making body although there will be overlapping between the school board and its administrators in policy formulation and implementation.

2. The quality of board deliberations is influenced by the amount of information available to the board members. Therefore, considerable information should be available to the decision-makers.

3. The superintendent should be the key source of information for the board.

4. The administration should prepare and send to the trustees the previous meeting's minutes, the agenda, a list of accounts payable, the current financial statement, the administrator's recommended

courses of action on agenda items, and background materials on which the recommendations are based. These documents should reach the trustees at least two days prior to the meeting and no items should be added to the agenda after the materials are sent out.

5. The board should act as a committee-of-the-whole to question the facts and appraise the recommendations brought to it by the administration. Therefore, the use of board committees should be discontinued.

6. The agenda should be arranged so action items come at the beginning of the meeting followed by non-action items.

7. Materials sent out prior to the meeting should not be presented orally during the meeting.

8. The superintendent should offer advice and give explanations during the meeting, but should not present a 'superintendent's report'.

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CHAPTER IV

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

I. DATA COLLECTION

This study was designed primarily to determine the extent of flow
of information to school boards. To obtain these data two techniques
were used: (1) a questionnaire was developed to obtain data on pre-
meeting preparation as well as general information on the board and
its organization, and (2) tape recordings of board meetings were
used to determine the extent of information and opinion which came to
the board during the meeting.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire which was developed consisted of two main parts
entitled "General Board Operation" and "Structuring of Meetings."

The section of the questionnaire entitled "General Board Operation"
requested information on the size of participating systems in terms
of pupil enrolment, the number and length of both public and committee-
of-the-whole meetings held each month, and the number and names of the
standing committees of the board.

In the part of the questionnaire entitled "Structuring of Meetings"
information was solicited on the nature and extent of distribution,
the time of distribution, and the officials who prepared each of the
following documents:

1. Minutes of the previous meeting.

2. Current financial statement.

3. List of accounts payable.

4. Agenda of the forthcoming meeting.

5. Administrative staff memorandum.

6. Enclosures.

The information, solicited by means of the questionnaire, was
gathered by the investigator visiting each school board office and
interviewing the superintendent. While the questionnaire was simple
enough to have been completed without the interview, it was felt that
this method afforded the researcher a better opportunity to determine
more specifically the nature of the materials distributed. Further-
more, samples of the materials could be obtained.

Tape Recordings

The recordings of the school board meetings were previously obtained
by a group of students in the Department of Educational Administration,
University of Alberta. Data on the extent of information and opinion
provided during the meeting was obtained by listening to the recordings
and classifying each individual comment as information or opinion.
Each comment regardless of length was given equal weight and the extent
of information or opinion was determined by totalling the instances.

The comments were further classified according to source and
operational area. The sources used for classification were: (1) pre-
meeting documents, (2) the superintendent, (3) the secretary-treasurer,
(4) the chairman, (5) board committees, (6) board members, and (7) other
sources such as delegations, architects, and salary negotiators. No
category of opinion for pre-meeting documents was included since it
was felt that all of these documents contained information for the
board. Also there was no opinion category for board committees because

in many instances it was impossible to determine whether a board
member was expressing his own opinion or a collective opinion of the
committee. As a result all opinions given by trustees, whether as a
committee member or an individual, were categorized as board member
opinions.

Finally, all information and opinion was classified according to
seven operational areas. They were: (1) staff personnel, (2) pupil
personnel, (3) instructional program, (4) business management and
accounting, (5) buildings, property, and maintenance, (6) transportation,
and (7) school board matters. School board matters included such
things as setting meeting dates, approving minutes, deciding on meeting
procedure, and appointing committees and assigning tasks to them.

II. THE SAMPLE

The sample consisted of four Alberta school boards, arbitrarily
selected, with each representing a different type and size of district.
District 1, serving approximately 1200 students, was a town district
while district 2 was a county, serving roughly 2300 students. Two
urban districts, a small urban district with about 6000 students and
a large urban district with approximately 65000 students, hereafter
referred to as districts 3 and 4 respectively, made up the rest of the
sample. Districts of different sizes were selected to see if the nature
and extent of distribution of information was related to this factor.

Recordings of two meetings for each board which occurred at
approximately the same time during the school year (from February to
June) were used in the study. This meant that about six hours of meeting

time were observed for each board. In the case of district 2, the
county, only one meeting was used since one of their meetings lasted
five to six hours.

III. PRESENTING THE DATA

The data obtained by the questionnaire on general board operation
and the nature and extent of pre-meeting preparation was presented
in Chapter V. An overall picture of general board operation and extent
of pre-meeting preparation is given for each district separately and
then comparisons are made among the districts. The question posed by
sub-problem one was answered in this manner.

The data from the recordings were used to describe each district in
three ways: First, the total number of times information and opinion
were given for each district is presented. Second, the raw data was
then converted into percentages and the following patterns according to
source were given for each district:

1. a pattern of information according to source for all operational
areas together,

2. a pattern of information according to source for each operational
area separately,

3. a pattern of opinion according to source for all operational
areas together, and

4. a pattern of opinion according to source for each operational
area separately.

Third, the following patterns in percentage form by operational area
were presented:

1. a pattern of information according to operational area for all sources together,

2. a pattern of information according to operational area for each source individually,

3. a pattern of opinion according to operational area for all sources together, and

4. a pattern of opinion according to operational area for each source individually.

The description of each district in the above manner is followed by comparisons among the districts. Sub-problems 2, 3, and 4 are thus answered.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL BOARD OPERATION AND PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

The purpose of the present chapter is two-fold: (1) to describe
the general operating practices with respect to the conduct of board
meetings of the participating districts, and (2) to describe the
nature and extent of pre-meeting preparation in each of the four
districts.

I. FINDINGS

District 1

General board operation. District number one, the smallest
participating district with a school enrolment of approximately 1200
students, held an average of 10.6 hours of meetings per month. Table
I shows that this consisted of an average of 2.2 public meetings and
one committee-of-the-whole meeting each month.

TABLE I

TIME SPENT PER MONTH BY DISTRICT 1 IN MEETINGS

Public Meetings			Committee-of-the-whole meetings			Grand Total Meeting Time
Number	Length	Total	Number	Length	Total	
2.2	3 hrs.	6.6 hrs.	1	4 hrs.	4 hrs.	10.6 hours

The public meetings were approximately three hours in length while the committee-of-the-whole meetings were four hours long. Besides, many more hours were spent in meetings of special and standing committees.

This board made extensive use of both standing and special committees. Four standing committees entitled finance, buildings and property, education, and administration, were in existence at the time of the study. All standing committees consisted of the whole board so in effect standing committees were really committee-of-the-whole meetings dealing with one aspect of school board operation. Special committees that reported during the course of the meetings under study were a committee on sabbatical leave, a committee to coordinate high school services with other jurisdictions, a clerical staff committee, and a noon hour supervision committee. Much time was taken up during the public meetings deciding whether an item should be dealt with by a committee or in the public meeting.

Pre-meeting preparation. The superintendent reported that the following documents reached the trustees two or three days before every meeting: (1) the minutes of the previous meeting, and (2) the agenda of the forthcoming meeting. As well, some special reports providing background information on some items were sent out for some meetings. In no instances did the current financial statement, a list of accounts payable, and the administrative staff memorandum go to trustees prior to the meetings. The current financial statement and the accounts payable were presented orally by the secretary-treasurer at the meeting while the superintendent's recommendations on agenda items were made verbally at the meeting. He also presented verbally

and in writing at the meeting a superintendent's report consisting
primarily of information with respect to the operation of schools.
For example, for the meeting under observation the report included the
monthly attendance and enrolment of pupils by grade and school, teacher
absences, special activities in schools, plant cleanliness, and a resumé
of topics dealt with at staff meetings in each school. In general
the information in the superintendent's report was not used by the
board members as the basis for their decisions with respect to the
agenda items.

The superintendent and secretary-treasurer shared the responsibility
for preparing pre-meeting documents. The minutes were prepared by the
secretary-treasurer while the agenda was prepared jointly by both of
them. Enclosures that dealt with the area of instructional personnel
or the instructional program were prepared by the superintendent, while
enclosures on the areas of finance or buildings and property were
prepared by the secretary-treasurer.

District 2

General board operation. The school committee of the county held
fourteen public meetings during the 1966-67 school year. As is indicated
in Table II, this was an average of 1.2 meetings per month. Since
each meeting was approximately 5.5 hours long, the committee spent an
average of 6.6 hours in meetings each month. Because there was a lack
of public attendance at the school committee meetings, it was felt
unnecessary to schedule any closed meetings.

Very sparing use had been made of committees by this school committee.
Only one standing committee, a bus shop committee, was in existence at

the time of the study. Furthermore, it met only once each year to recommend upon the removal from service of old busses and the purchase of new ones. During the course of the meeting which was heard via the tape only one special committee, the salary negotiating committee, reported. Generally, according to the superintendent, this was the only special committee used in the 1966-67 term.

TABLE II

TIME SPENT PER MONTH BY DISTRICT 2 IN MEETINGS

Public Meetings			Committee-of-the-whole meetings			Grand Total Meeting Time
Number	Length	Total	Number	Length	Total	
1.2	5.5 hrs.	6.6 hrs.	nil	nil	nil	6.6 hours

Pre-meeting preparation. The information sent out to committee members about two weeks prior to the meeting included the minutes of the previous meeting, a list of accounts payable, and background material on agenda items which required extended information. Presented at the meeting were mimeographed copies of the agenda, the disbursements, and the administrator's recommended courses of action which were contained in a document entitled the superintendent's report. This document differed considerably from the superintendent's report which was presented to the board in district #1. It formed a part of the agenda and included the superintendent's recommendations as well as information to support these recommendations. In effect it was the administrative staff memorandum and the enclosures of the Davies-Brickell (1958) system combined.

Preparation of materials again was shared by the superintendent and the secretary-treasurer. The minutes, the current financial statement, and the list of accounts payable were prepared by the secretary-treasurer. The agenda, which was of the classical type, was compiled by the secretary-treasurer in consultation with the superintendent. The administrator's recommendations were prepared by the superintendent as were all enclosures regardless of the operational area to which they pertained. In the materials presented at the meeting under study, for example, the superintendent had prepared considerable information on the budget. There did not appear to be a sharp division of duties with respect to business and educational matters between the superintendent and secretary-treasurer such as that which existed in district 1.

District 3

General board operation. The small urban district, as shown in Table III, held an average of two public meetings of 3.5 hours duration each month. As well, an average of 1.5 committee-of-the-whole meetings of 1.5 hours duration were conducted. Thus, 9.25 hours were spent by this board in meetings every month. This board, like district 1, made extensive use of committees. Three standing committees were in operation at the time of the study. They were the property committee, the finance committee, and the school management committee. The latter committee concerned itself with such matters as staff appointments, tendering for school supplies, and the school program. The only special committee reporting during the observed meetings was the salary negotiating committee.

TABLE III

TIME SPENT PER MONTH BY DISTRICT 3 IN MEETINGS

Public Meetings			Committee-of-the-whole Meetings			Grand Total Meeting Time
Number	Length	Total	Number	Length	Total	
2	3.5	7.0 hrs.	1.5	1.5 hrs.	2.25 hrs.	9.25 hours

Pre-meeting preparation. The documents reaching the trustees approximately two days before each meeting included the minutes, a list of accounts payable, the agenda, and enclosures. If the meeting did not come early in the month, a current financial statement was sent to the trustees prior to the meeting. It should be noted that the enclosures consisted primarily of xeroxed copies of correspondence received during the month and that very few reports giving information prepared by the administrative staff were sent out. The superintendent gave his recommendations verbally during the meeting.

Compilation of pre-meeting materials followed a similar pattern to that of district 1. The secretary-treasurer prepared the minutes, the current financial statement, and the list of accounts payable. The secretary-treasurer and superintendent prepared the conventional-type agenda in consultation with each other. If special reports were required, the secretary-treasurer prepared them if they were in the area of business administration, while the superintendent prepared them if they dealt with educational topics.

District 4

General board operation. Table IV shows that the large urban board

spent 8.5 hours per month in board meetings. This total time was

comprised of two public meetings of 2.5 hours duration each and two

committee-of-the-whole meetings of 1.5 hours each. Since no special or

standing committees were in existence during the 1966-67 school year,

no further time was spent in meetings by any board members.

TABLE IV

TIME SPENT PER MONTH BY DISTRICT 4 IN MEETINGS

Public Meetings			Committee-of-the-whole meetings			Grand Total Meeting Time
Number	Length	Total	Number	Length	Total	
2	2.5	5 hrs.	2	1.5	3.0 hrs.	8.5 hours

Pre-meeting preparation. Extensive preparation of both the adminis-

tration and the trustees for board meetings was evident. The Davies-

Brickell system (1958) for conducting board meetings was being closely

followed. Documents reaching the trustees three days prior to each

meeting included the minutes, the agenda, the administrative staff

memorandum, and the keyed enclosures. A current financial statement

and a list of accounts payable did not go to the trustees since the

auditor's department in this district was completely in charge of these

financial matters.

The special Davies-Brickell format, consisting of two pages and

five main parts, was used for the agenda. On the first page were parts

A and B; part A contained the calling of the meeting to order and the roll call, while part B was a listing of all of the action items which required board decisions. Included in part B were the routine matters such as approval of the minutes as well as unfinished and new business. On page two were parts C, D, and E. Part C, entitled information and proposals, included the hearing of delegations, the presentation of staff and non-staff reports, and the asking of questions by and of board members. These items were primarily for board information and therefore, were termed non-action. Part D included planning for future meetings and presenting notices of motion while Part E was the adjournment.

The administrative staff memorandum, keyed by letters and numbers to the agenda, contained the administration's recommendations on all action items in part B. Since the items in part C were non-action items, the administrative staff memorandum did not contain recommendations on these items, but merely presented a brief resumé of information related to the item. This memorandum indicated at the end of each item whether there was an enclosure containing more information.

A third set of documents, the enclosures, were keyed to the agenda by letters and numbers as well as by color. Enclosures relating to action items in part B of the agenda were on white bond, while those relating to non-action items were on yellow bond. While some of the enclosures were copies of correspondence related to agenda items, the majority of them were specially-prepared reports giving the necessary background information on which the recommendations in the administrative staff memorandum were based.

The responsibility for the preparation of these documents rested with the superintendent, but in effect were prepared under the direction of the two associate superintendents. All three officials met to compile the items for the agenda. After the agenda had been set, the items were divided into business and education. The associate superintendent of instruction was then given responsibility for the preparation of documents on items in the educational area, while the associate superintendent of business was in charge of preparing the documents relating to business items.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

General Board Operation

Time spent in meetings. The time spent per month in meetings by each of the four boards is summarized in Table V. The total time spent by each board was: 10.6 hours for the board of district 1, the smallest district; 6.6 hours for the board of district 2, the second largest district; 9.25 hours for the board of district 3, the third largest district; and 8.5 hours for district 4, the largest district. Time spent in public meetings per month ranged from a low of 4.5 hours in district 4 to 7.0 hours in district 3, while the time spent in closed meetings ranged from no time in district 2, to a high of 4.0 hours in both district 1 and district 4.

Use of committees. The number of standing committees being used by each of the four boards is given in Table VI. District 1, the smallest district, operated with four committees which was more than in any other district. District 2 operated with one committee, district 3

operated with three, while district 4, the largest district, did not use any standing committees.

TABLE V

HOURS SPENT IN MEETINGS BY THE FOUR DISTRICTS

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4
Public Meetings	6.6	6.6	7.0	4.5
Closed Meetings	4.0	0.0	2.25	4.0
Total Time	10.6	6.6	9.25	8.5

TABLE VI

THE NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEES BEING USED
IN THE FOUR DISTRICTS

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4
Number of Committees	4	1	3	0

Pre-meeting Preparation

The extent of preparation for board meetings by the boards of the four districts has been summarized in Table VII. This table shows that all boards received the minutes of the previous meeting, three out of four boards received the agenda sometime prior to the meeting day, two out of three boards who handle the approval of accounts received a list of accounts payable, and all boards received background materials in varying amounts and types. No boards received the current financial

statement in advance of the meeting and only one board received the
superintendent's recommendations prior to the meeting.

TABLE VII

DOCUMENTS SENT TO TRUSTEES PRIOR TO BOARD
MEETINGS IN EACH DISTRICT

Type of Document	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	Total of Each Document
Minutes of Previous Meeting	x	x	x	x	4
Current Financial Statement					0
List of Accounts Payable		x	x		2
Agenda of Forthcoming Meeting	x		x	x	3
Administrative Staff Memorandum				x	1
Keyed Enclosures	x	x	x	x	4

III. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The amount of time spent in meetings by the boards of the participating
districts varied considerably. Although one would expect the amount of
meeting time to be greater in the larger districts, this was not demons-
trated by these four districts. The boards of both the town district
and the small urban district spent more time in meetings than the board
of the large urban district. Only the school committee of the county
spent less time in meetings than the large urban board.

While there are many factors, such as the existence of policy, that can affect the amount of time spent in meetings, the extent of use of committees and the amount of pre-meeting preparation appear to have affected the time spent in meetings by the four boards participating in this study. The boards of districts 2 and 4 which made the least use of committees were the boards that spent the least time in meetings. Furthermore, it was also these two boards, and particularly the board of district 4, that received the most pre-meeting preparation.

The use of committees adds to meeting time because committee reports are prepared and presented by individuals who are untrained in administration. As a result, superfluous material is sometimes presented. Furthermore, presentation of committee reports is usually oral which can be very time-consuming.

Since there was very little difference in the number of pre-meeting materials received by each of the boards, it appeared that the nature of the materials rather than the quantity was the factor which affected the length of meeting time. The two documents, containing the administrator's recommended courses of action and the material supporting the recommendations, which the trustees of only district 4 received, appeared to be the documents which reduced meeting time the most. By receiving these materials in advance the board members are able to evaluate the recommendations, to take a position on them, and to formulate arguments for or against them before the meeting begins. In this way time is saved since all the trustees need to do at the meeting is to state their position and present their arguments. If they do not have the recommendations prior to the meeting, the trustees must go through all steps during the meeting, thereby taking considerably more time.

CHAPTER VI

PATTERNS OF INFORMATION AND OPINION BY
SOURCE AND OPERATIONAL AREA

The previous chapter described some of the general operational

practices and the extent of pre-meeting preparation of the four

participating school boards. The districts were also compared with

respect to these two aspects of operation.

The present chapter has three purposes:

(1) to give the extent of information and opinion supplied during

board meetings in each district;

(2) to show the distribution of information and opinion by source

for each district; and

(3) to show the distribution of information and opinion by

operational area for each district.

I. EXTENT OF INFORMATION AND OPINION

The total number of times information and opinion were given during

the two meetings under study in each of the four districts is contained

in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

EXTENT OF INFORMATION AND OPINION BY DISTRICTS

Frequency of Instances	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4
Information	491	298	510	372
Opinion	552	283	719	253

Extent of Information

The greatest number of instances of information were given in district 1, the town district, and in district 3, the small urban district, where 491 and 510 instances were provided respectively. The school committee of the county, district 2, received the least number of instances with 298, while the large urban system, district 4, received information 372 times during the two meetings. From listening to the tapes, it became obvious that the number of times information was received during the meeting was related to the amount of pre-meeting preparation. Where there was extensive preparation of written pre-meeting documents, there were fewer instances of information provided since each instance tended to be longer, more comprehensive, and more to the point, while there were more instances where there had been little pre-meeting preparation since they tended to be short, choppy, and less to the point. Thus, even though it may appear that districts 1 and 3 received more information during their meetings, they may, in fact, have received less.

Extent of Opinion

The amount of opinion given during the two meetings in the four districts followed a pattern similar to that of the information. Table VIII shows that the number of instances of opinion received in districts 1 to 4 were 552, 283, 719, and 253 respectively. This means that boards that received the greatest number of instances of information also received the greatest number of instances of opinion, while those receiving the least instances of information received the least instances of opinion. Although this general pattern was present,

the two districts that received the greatest number of instances of information received more instances of opinion than information while the two districts that received the least number of instances of information received fewer instances of opinion than information. Thus, districts 1 and 3 received 61 and 209 more instances of opinion than information respectively while districts 2 and 4 received 15 and 109 fewer instances of opinion than information respectively.

II. PATTERNS OF INFORMATION BY SOURCE

Overall Information Patterns by Source

Table IX, which gives the overall distribution of information by source in the four districts. shows that district 4, the large urban district, received 23.3 per cent of the information presented during the meeting from pre-meeting documents. This is considerably more than the other districts since the next highest is district 3 with 8.8 per cent. The percentage of information supplied by the superintendent tended to be higher when less information was forthcoming through pre-meeting documents. Districts 1 and 2, that received less information through pre-meeting documents, got 28.7 and 30.8 per cent respectively from their superintendents, while districts 3 and 4 received 22.7 and 24.5 per cent respectively. While this tendency did exist, it did not nearly make up for the lack of information received from pre-meeting documents since the percentage of information attributed to both pre-meeting documents and the superintendent are 47.8 for district 4, 31.5 for district 3, 36.5 for district 2, and 30.5 for district 1.

TABLE IX

OVERALL INFORMATION PATTERN ACCORDING TO SOURCE IN PERCENTAGE FORM
FOR ALL FOUR DISTRICTS

	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
District 1	1.8	28.7	21.4	15.1	5.3	11.2	16.5	100.0
District 2	5.7	30.8	25.2	19.1	0.0	14.8	4.4	100.0
District 3	8.8	22.7	14.9	20.0	1.0	6.1	26.5	100.0
District 4	23.3	24.5	15.1	13.2	0.0	14.2	9.7	100.0

The secretary-treasurer tended to be a more important source of information in the smaller districts. The small districts, districts 1 and 2, got 21.4 and 25.2 per cent respectively from this source, while districts 3 and 4 received 14.9 and 15.1 per cent respectively. The fact that the county received more information from its secretary-treasurer may be due to the fact that it was the only district that had a provincially employed superintendent and the secretary-treasurer may still be performing tasks which are beyond the legal definition of his duties.

The amount of information supplied by the chairman, the committees, and the board members as a group, did not vary much from district to district. The three as a group were 31.6, 33.9, 27.1 and 27.4 respectively. However, the breakdown among the three varied considerably among the four boards. District 1 reflected its committee orientation by getting 5.3 per cent of its information from this source. District 2 received information from only the chairman and the board members with none from committees. The chairman supplied 19.1 per cent of it as compared to 14.8 per cent from the trustees. Of these three sources the chairman, who supplied 20 out of 27.1 per cent, was by far the most productive source in district 3. In district 4 the information received was divided almost evenly between the chairman and the trustees with 13.2 and 14.2 per cent respectively from each source.

A great deal of variation in amount of information from "other sources" was noted. This varied from 4.4 per cent in district 2 to 26.5 per cent in district 3. The two most significant "other sources" were salary negotiating committees and architects, particularly the

latter. While all boards were involved in discussions of building

programs during the meetings studied, some, such as district 3,

depended on the architect as a primary source of information at

meetings whereas others, such as district 4, obtained information

from architects through their own administration.

District 1

According to Table X the pre-meeting documents in this district

contained information primarily in the areas of staff personnel and

school board matters. While the superintendent was a productive source

in all operational areas, the bulk of the information he gave was on

staff personnel, instructional program, buildings, property, and mainte-

nance and school board matters where he supplied 26.2, 22.0, 16.4,

and 13.5 per cent respectively. The secretary-treasurer confined his

information giving mainly to two areas; buildings, property and

maintenance received 42.9 per cent and school board matters received

25.7 per cent. In the area of business management and accounting the

secretary-treasurer gave a smaller percentage of information than the

superintendent.

The chairman's information pattern was similar to that of the

secretary-treasurer; 33.8 per cent of the information he gave was in

the area of buildings, property, and maintenance while 27.0 per cent

was on school board matters. He was however, somewhat more active

in giving information in the areas of staff personnel and pupil

personnel. The bulk of the information supplied by committees was

in two areas; 65.5 per cent in staff personnel and 26.9 per cent in

buildings, property and maintenance. The board members supplied

TABLE X

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 1 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	44.4	26.2	8.6	10.8	65.5	21.8	0.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	9.9	6.7	13.5	0.0	14.5	3.7
Instructional Program	11.2	22.0	4.8	8.1	0.0	9.1	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	0.0	9.2	5.7	6.8	3.8	5.5	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	0.0	16.4	42.9	33.8	26.9	32.7	95.1
Transportation	0.0	2.8	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
School Board Matters	44.4	13.5	25.7	27.0	3.8	16.4	1.2
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

information mainly in three areas; 21.8 per cent in staff personnel, 32.7 per cent in buildings, property, and maintenance, and 16.4 per cent in school board matters. "Others" output of information was almost exclusively confined to buildings, property and maintenance with 95.1 per cent.

District 2

The pre-meeting documents in district 2 contained information which was fairly evenly distributed among six of the seven operational areas. As Table XI shows, only one area, pupil personnel, did not receive any information from pre-meeting documents. The superinten-dent gave most of his information in the areas of staff personnel and the instructional program where he gave 56.5 and 19.6 per cent respectively. The secretary-treasurer's information pattern in this district was somewhat different from the previous one in that he gave considerable information in the areas of staff personnel and business management and accounting. In these areas he gave 21.3 and 18.7 per cent respectively. However, like his counterpart in district 1, he did give a good deal of his information on school board matters. There he gave 29.3 per cent.

The chairman's information pattern was also different from his counterpart in the last district; 47.4 of his information was on staff personnel, 15.8 per cent on pupil personnel, and 17.5 on school board matters. No information came from committees, while the school committee members divided their information output into three main areas; 27.3 per cent in staff personnel, 27.3 in pupil personnel, and 25.0 per cent in school board matters. All of the information from

TABLE XI

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 2 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	17.8	56.5	21.3	47.4	0.0	27.3	100.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	4.4	8.1	0.0	0.0	27.3	0.0
Instructional Program	11.8	19.6	9.3	15.8	0.0	2.3	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	11.8	5.4	18.7	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	17.6	6.5	4.0	10.5	0.0	13.6	0.0
Transportation	11.8	0.0	9.3	7.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
School Board Matters	29.2	7.6	29.3	17.5	0.0	25.0	0.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

"others" came from a teacher's salary negotiating committee, so this
fell in the area of staff personnel.

District 3

Table XII shows that no information was supplied during the two
meetings under observation in this district in the areas of pupil
personnel and transportation. Therefore, the information supplied
was divided among five areas instead of seven. The pre-meeting
documents contained information on four of these; 37.8 per cent on
the instructional program, 17.8 on business management and accounting,
20 per cent on buildings, property and maintenance, and 24.4 per cent
on school board matters. The superintendent gave his information
mainly in three areas: instructional program, staff personnel, and
buildings, property and maintenance. The secretary-treasurer supplied
42.1 of his information in the area of business management and accounting
and 26.3 per cent in school board matters. The chairman, who was the
spokesman for the board in negotiating salaries, reflected this by
giving the bulk of his information, 45.1 per cent, in staff personnel.
Committees supplied information in similar areas to the other board
that operated with committees, namely 40.0 per cent in staff personnel,
40.0 per cent in business management and accounting, and 20.0 per cent in
buildings, property, and maintenance. The board members gave 22.6 per
cent of their information in the area of staff personnel, 29.0 in
instructional program, and 22.6 per cent in school board matters.
Like other districts, the outside sources gave information on staff
personnel and buildings, property and maintenance.

TABLE XII

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 3 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	0.0	31.1	15.8	45.1	40.0	22.6	58.5
Pupil Personnel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Instructional Program	37.8	20.7	5.3	5.9	0.0	29.0	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	17.8	7.7	42.1	7.8	40.0	9.7	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	20.0	28.4	10.5	17.7	20.0	16.1	41.5
Transportation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
School Board Matters	24.4	12.1	26.3	23.5	0.0	22.6	0.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

District 4

As is indicated by Table XIII, the pre-meeting documents contained information in all operational areas. The areas that received the most information from this source were buildings, property, and maintenance, staff personnel, and school board matters where 39.1, 16.1, and 14.9 were received respectively. The superintendent contributed much of his information in two of these areas; 40.7 per cent on buildings, property and maintenance and 19.8 per cent on staff personnel. However, he contributed only 1.1 per cent on school board matters. Instead he contributed 30.8 on the instructional program. The secretary-treasurer made his contribution in typical areas: 58.9 per cent in buildings, property and maintenance, and 14.3 per cent in each of business management and accounting and school board matters. The chairman's three most productive areas were staff personnel, buildings, property and maintenance, and school board matters where 14.3, 51.0, and 14.3 per cent were given respectively. The trustees made a similar contribution to the chairman. However, they also contributed 20.8 per cent in business management and accounting. Outside sources made their major contribution in pupil personnel and buildings, property and maintenance where they gave 52.8 and 33.3 per cent respectively.

Summary

Table XIV is a summary of the most productive areas of information for each source in all districts. Pre-meeting documents made important contributions of information in the area of school board matters in all districts and in the areas of staff personnel and buildings, property

TABLE XIII

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 4 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	16.1	19.8	3.6	14.3	0.0	13.2	0.0
Pupil Personnel	3.6	2.2	5.4	4.1	0.0	0.0	33.3
Instructional Program	12.6	30.8	1.7	6.1	0.0	1.9	5.6
Business Management and Accounting	12.6	5.4	14.3	10.2	0.0	20.8	8.3
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	39.1	40.7	58.9	51.0	0.0	50.9	52.8
Transportation	1.1	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
School Board Matters	14.9	1.1	14.3	14.3	0.0	13.2	0.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE XIV

SUMMARY OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE AREAS OF INFORMATION FOR EACH SOURCE
IN ALL FOUR DISTRICTS

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurers	Chairmen	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	3	4	3	3	1	4	2
Pupil Personnel	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Instructional Program	2	4	1	0	0	1	0
Business Management and Accounting	0	0	3	0	1	1	0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	3	3	2	3	2	2	3
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Board Matters	4	1	4	4	0	4	1

NOTE: The figures in this table indicate the number of districts in which the information, given by a source, was one of his three top contributions for all operation areas. Thus, a figure 4 means that in all districts the information which was given by that source was one of this three top contributions for all operational areas.

and maintenance in three districts. The superintendents made important

contributions in areas of staff personnel and the instructional program

in four districts as well as in the area of buildings, property, and

maintenance in three districts. In all districts the secretary-

treasurers made important contributions in the area of school board

matters while in three districts they made important contributions

in the areas of staff personnel and business management and accounting.

Similarly, the chairmen contributed heavily in the area of school board

matters in all districts and to the staff personnel area in three dis-

tricts. They also made important contributions to the area of buildings,

property, and maintenance in three of the districts. Committees

contributed most in the area of buildings, property and maintenance

where they made important contributions in two districts. In all

districts the trustees made important contributions in the areas of

staff personnel and school board matters while in two districts they

contributed heavily in the area of buildings, property, and maintenance.

The "other sources" contributed heavily in the buildings, property, and

maintenance area in all districts as well as in the area of pupil

personnel and staff personnel in two districts.

<div align="center">III. PATTERNS OF OPINION BY SOURCE</div>

<u>Overall Opinion Pattern</u>

The overall distribution of opinion by source for the four districts

is shown in Table XV. Generally, the major sources of opinion were

quite different from the major sources of information. While the

majority of information came from pre-meeting documents, the

TABLE XV

OVERALL OPINION PATTERN ACCORDING TO SOURCE IN PERCENTAGE FORM
FOR ALL DISTRICTS

	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
District 1	8.9	9.6	33.5	35.0	13.0	100.0
District 2	14.8	10.6	25.1	49.1	0.4	100.0
District 3	14.5	7.0	31.2	23.5	23.8	100.0
District 4	18.2	6.7	17.0	57.3	0.8	100.0

superintendent and the secretary-treasurer, the majority of opinion

came from the chairman and the trustees. The table bears this out

since it shows that chairman and trustees as a group in districts 1

to 4 gave 68.5, 74.2, 54.7, and 74.3 per cent of the opinion respec-

tively, while the superintendent and secretary-treasurer as a group

gave 18.5, 25.4, 21.5, and 24.9 per cent respectively in the four

districts. Of the former group, the trustees were the most productive

in giving opinion--they reached a high of 57.3 per cent of all opinion

given in district 4, while in the latter group the superintendent was

the more productive source of opinion.

District 1

The distribution of opinion by each source, as shown by Table XVI,

is very similar to the pattern of information for that source. Thus,

the superintendent gave most of his opinion in staff personnel, instruc-

tional program, buildings, property and maintenance, and school board

matters. The first three areas are also the areas in which he gave

the most of his information. Likewise the secretary-treasurer gave

most of his opinion in the same two operational areas as he had given

information; 39.6 per cent in buildings, property and maintenance and

34.0 per cent in school board matters. The chairman was also most

productive in these two areas. He gave 35.7 per cent in the former

area and 20.5 per cent in the latter area. These were also his most

productive areas for information. The trustees contributed most of

their opinion in the same areas as they had given information; 25.9

per cent in buildings, property and maintenance, 29.5 per cent in

staff personnel, and 18.1 in school board matters. The outside sources

TABLE XVI

OPINION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 1 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	30.7	9.4	14.6	29.5	0.0
Pupil Personnel	10.2	0.0	7.0	7.8	18.1
Instructional Program	16.3	3.8	11.9	5.7	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	10.2	9.4	10.3	10.9	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	16.3	39.6	35.7	25.9	79.2
Transportation	0.0	3.8	0.0	2.1	2.7
School Board Matters	16.3	34.0	20.5	18.1	0.0
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

confined their opinion to pupil personnel and buildings, property and
maintenance where they gave 18.1 per cent and 79.2 per cent respectively.

District 2

The pattern of opinion by the sources in this jurisdiction deviated
from their pattern of information. While most sources gave the greater
part of their information in the areas of staff personnel, the instruc-
tional program, and school board matters, table XVII indicates that they
confined most of their opinion to the two former areas and pupil
personnel replaced school board matters as the third area where most
opinion was given.

The superintendent's most productive area was staff personnel where
64.3 per cent was given. The secretary-treasurer gave most of his
opinion, 26.7 per cent, in the area of school board matters, although
he contributed extensively in staff personnel with 23.3 per cent and
pupil personnel with 16.6 per cent. The chairman confined most of his
opinion to staff personnel, pupil personnel, and the instructional
program where he supplied 45.1, 18.3, and 15.5 per cent respectively,
while the school committee members devoted 67.5 per cent of their
opinion to staff personnel and 9.4 per cent to each of pupil personnel
and buildings, property and maintenance.

All sources in this district were less productive in the operational
area of buildings, property and maintenance than the sources in other
districts. However, they were far more productive in pupil personnel
than any other district.

District 3

A similar pattern of opinion by source to that of information by

TABLE XVII

OPINION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 2 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	64.3	23.3	45.1	67.5	0.0
Pupil Personnel	7.1	16.6	18.3	9.4	0.0
Instructional Program	11.9	13.3	15.5	4.3	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	9.5	6.7	4.3	2.2	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	4.8	6.7	5.6	9.4	0.0
Transportation	0.0	6.7	4.2	2.9	0.0
School Board Matters	2.4	26.7	7.0	4.3	0.0
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0

source is revealed by Table XVIII. The superintendent had a similar

opinion pattern to his information pattern giving the bulk of his

opinion in the same areas as he gave his information; 26.0 per cent

in the instructional program area, 29.8 per cent in buildings, property

and maintenance, and 15.4 per cent in both staff personnel and

business management and accounting. The secretary's opinion pattern

varied slightly from his information pattern. His three most pro-

ductive areas for opinion were school board matters where he gave

31.4 per cent, buildings, property and maintenance where 25.5 per

cent was given and business management and accounting where 23.5 per

cent was given. In the latter area he did not contribute much

information. The chairman of this board gave most of his opinion in the

staff personnel area where he supplied 65.1 per cent. This was the

same area to which he contributed most of his information. Board

member opinion was divided rather evenly among the five operational

areas in which opinion was given. It varied from a low of 14.2 per cent

to a high of 29.6 per cent. All opinion by "other sources" was given

in the staff personnel and building, property and maintenance categories

where 86.5 and 13.5 per cent respectively were given.

District 4

Table XIX shows that all of the sources in this district were

generally more productive in the buildings, property and maintenance

and the business management and accounting areas and less productive

in staff personnel and school board matters areas than the other

districts were. Less opinion than information was given in staff

personnel and school board matters and more opinion than information

TABLE XVIII

OPINION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 3 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	15.4	9.8	65.1	17.8	86.5
Pupil Personnel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Instructional Program	26.0	9.8	11.6	29.6	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	15.4	23.5	4.5	14.2	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	29.8	25.5	6.7	18.9	13.5
Transportation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
School Board Matters	13.4	31.4	12.1	19.5	0.0
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE XIX

OPINION PATTERNS BY SOURCE FOR DISTRICT 4 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	15.2	0.0	6.9	6.2	0.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
Instructional Program	21.7	0.0	18.6	10.3	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	10.9	17.6	6.9	15.2	0.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	47.8	76.5	60.7	60.0	0.0
Transportation	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0
School Board Matters	4.4	5.9	6.9	4.8	0.0
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0

in the business and acounting area. The three areas in which the
superintendent was most productive were: 47.8 per cent in buildings,
property and maintenance, 21.7 per cent in the instructional program,
and 15.2 per cent in staff personnel. The secretary-treasurer gave
76.5 per cent of his opinion in buildings, property and maintenance,
17.6 per cent in business management and accounting, and 5.9 in
school board matters. Also contributing heavily in buildings, pro-
perty and maintenance was the chairman with 60.7 per cent. His next
highest contribution was in the area of the instructional program with
18.6 per cent. The board's most productive areas were buildings, pro-
perty and maintenance, business management and accounting, and the
instructional program. Their respective contributions in these areas
were 60.0, 15.2, 10.3 per cent. "Other sources" offered no opinions in
this district.

Summary

Table XX gives the most productive areas of opinion for each source
in all districts. It shows that the superintendent made important con-
tributions of opinion in the area of staff personnel in all four
districts, and in the areas of the instructional program and buildings,
property, and maintenance in three districts. The secretary-treasurers
made important contributions in the area of school board matters in four
districts and in the areas of business management and accounting and
buildings, property, and maintenance in three districts. In all of
the districts the chairmen made important contributions in the staff
personnel area while in three of the districts they made important
contributions in the areas of the instructional program and school

TABLE XX

SUMMARY OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE AREAS OF OPINION FOR EACH SOURCE
IN ALL FOUR DISTRICTS

Operational Areas	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurers	Chairmen	Board Members	Other Sources
Staff Personnel	4	2	4	3	1
Pupil Personnel	1	1	1	1	1
Instructional Program	3	0	3	2	0
Business Management and Accounting	1	3	1	1	0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	3	3	2	3	2
Transportation	0	0	0	1	0
School Board Matters	1	4	3	2	0

NOTE: The figures in this table indicate the number of districts in which the information, given by a source, was one of his three top contributions for all operational areas. Thus, a figure of 4 means that in all districts the information which was given by that source was one of his three top contributions for all operational areas.

board matters. The trustees made important contributions in the areas
of staff personnel and buildings, property, and maintenance in three
districts and in the instructional program and school board matters in
two districts. "Other sources" did not contribute much opinion, but
their most important contribution was in the buildings, property, and
maintenance area where they contributed in two districts.

IV. PATTERNS OF INFORMATION AND OPINION BY OPERATIONAL AREA

Whereas the first part of the present chapter was devoted to a
description of the distribution of information and opinion given by
each source, the latter part of the chapter gives the distribution
by operational area. In other words, it attempts to answer the
question, "Of the total information and opinion given in each opera-
tional area, what percentage of the information and opinion comes from
each of the district's sources?" The previous section dealt with the
question: "Of the total information and opinions presented by each
source, what percentage is given in each operational area?"

Overall Pattern of Information

The distribution of all of the information which was presented in
the seven operational areas in each district is contained in Table XXI.
Generally speaking, it reveals that all four boards got most infor-
mation in the areas of staff personnel and buildings, property and
maintenance. Although there was a large variation among the districts
in the amount of information presented in each of these two areas,
the total percentage of both areas shows a remarkable similarity. For
districts one to four respectively, the total percentages are 57.4,

TABLE XXI

OVERALL INFORMATION PATTERN ACCORDING TO OPERATIONAL AREA IN PERCENTAGE FORM

	Staff Personnel	Pupil Personnel	Instructional Program	Business Management and Accounting	Buildings, Property and Maintenance	Transportation	School Board Matters	Totals
District 1	17.7	8.6	9.8	5.7	39.7	2.0	16.5	100.0
District 2	41.3	7.4	12.4	7.4	8.1	4.9	18.5	100.0
District 3	35.7	0.0	11.8	12.1	25.5	0.0	14.9	100.0
District 4	12.9	5.9	12.4	11.6	47.0	0.5	9.7	100.0

49.4, 61.2, and 59.9. The boards generally received little information
in the pupil personnel and transportation areas while in the areas of
instructional program and business management and accounting, each
board received from 5.7 per cent to 12.4 per cent in each area.

Looking at the pattern for each district, one is able to find some
differences though. Most of the information provided in district 1
fell in three areas; staff personnel, buildings, property and main-
tenance, and school board matters, while in district 2 it fell in
staff personnel, instructional program, and school board matters.
District 3, which was still different, got most information in staff
personnel, business management and accounting, and buildings, property
and maintenance. In district 4 most information was provided in staff
personnel, instructional program, and buildings, property and main-
tenance. Staff personnel emerged as the area in all districts where a
great deal of information was provided.

The pattern of information by operational area which was quite dif-
ferent from all other districts was that of district 2. In this district
61.1 per cent of all information fell into areas which were the most
directly related to education, namely staff personnel, pupil personnel,
and the instructional program. The corresponding figures for districts
1, 3, and 4 are 36.1, 47.5, and 31.2 per cent respectively. Thus,
district 2 was the only jurisdiction receiving most of its information
in what may be called "educational" areas.

Overall Pattern of Opinion

The overall pattern of opinion by operational area for the four
boards as presented in Table XXII is very similar to the pattern of

TABLE XXII

OVERALL OPINION PATTERN ACCORDING TO OPERATIONAL AREA IN PERCENTAGE FORM

	Staff Personnel	Pupil Personnel	Instructional Program	Business Management and Accounting	Buildings, Property and Maintenance	Transportation	School Board Matters	Totals
District 1	18.8	8.3	7.8	9.1	36.6	1.5	17.9	100.0
District 2	56.9	12.0	9.2	4.2	7.4	3.2	7.1	100.0
District 3	48.0	0.0	15.0	8.6	15.9	0.0	12.5	100.0
District 4	7.5	2.0	13.0	13.0	58.5	0.8	5.2	100.0

information. The two operational areas, staff personnel and buildings, property, and maintenance, received most of the opinion. Little opinion was received in the areas of pupil personnel and transportation, while moderate amounts, from 4.2 to 15 per cent, were received in the instructional program and buildings, property and maintenance areas. Considerable variations in percentage of opinion among the districts was evident with respect to school board matters.

A district-by-district approach reveals a good deal of difference between districts on the percentage of opinion relating directly to "educational" matters. The total percentage of opinion provided in the areas of staff personnel, pupil personnel, and instructional program in districts 2 and 3 was 78.1 and 63.0 per cent respectively. The other two districts received considerably less opinion in these areas--district 1 had 34.9 per cent, while district 4 had only 22.5 per cent.

District 1

Information pattern. Most of the information presented in each operational area came from three sources: the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, and the chairman. Staff personnel, as is indicated in Table XXIII, got 42.5 per cent of the information presented in that area from the superintendent and 19.5 and 13.8 per cent respectively from committees and trustees. The area of pupil personnel received 33.4 per cent from the superintendent, 23.8 per cent from the chairman, and 19.0 per cent from the trustees. In the area of the instructional program, the superintendent dominated information-giving by contributing 64.6 per cent. The chairman and trustees followed by giving

TABLE XXIII

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 1 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	4.2	42.5	10.9	9.1	19.5	13.8	0.0	100.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	33.4	16.7	23.8	0.0	19.0	7.1	100.0
Instructional Program	2.1	64.6	10.4	12.5	0.0	10.4	0.0	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	0.0	46.4	21.4	17.8	3.7	10.7	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	0.0	11.8	23.1	12.8	3.6	9.2	39.5	100.0
Transportation	0.0	40.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
School Board Matters	4.9	23.5	33.3	24.7	1.2	11.1	1.3	100.0

12.5 and 10.4 per cent respectively. In business management and
accounting, the superintendent gave 46.4 per cent which is more infor-
mation than the secretary-treasurer who gave 21.4 per cent. "Other
sources" with 39.5 per cent gave the most information in the area of
buildings, property and maintenance, followed by the secretary-treasurer
and chairman who gave 23.1 and 12.8 per cent respectively. Of the
small amount of information given in the transportation area, 40.0
per cent came from the superintendent and 60.0 per cent from the
secretary-treasurer. School board matters got 33.3, 24.7, and 23.5
per cent respectively from the secretary-treasurer, chairman, and
superintendent.

Opinion pattern. Table XXIV, which gives the distribution of
opinion by operational areas shows that in all areas the majority of
opinion came from the chairman and board members. The percentages
for these two as a group are 80.8, 60.9, 76.8, 80.0, 57.5, 50.0, and
73.8 per cent for the operational areas from staff personnel to
school board matters. The only areas that received significant
amounts of opinion from another source were pupil personnel where
28.3 per cent came from "other sources," instructional program where
18.6 per cent came from the superintendents, buildings, property,
and maintenance and transportation where 28.2 and 25.0 per cent
respectively came from "other sources," and school board matters
where 18.2 per cent was received from the secretary-treasurer.

District 2

Information pattern. While most operational areas received the
bulk of their information from the superintendent and secretary-

TABLE XXIV

OPINION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 1 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	14.4	4.8	26.0	54.8	0.0	100.0
Pupil Personnel	10.8	0.0	28.3	32.6	28.3	100.0
Instructional Program	18.6	4.6	51.2	25.6	0.0	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	10.0	10.0	38.0	42.0	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	4.0	10.3	32.7	24.8	28.2	100.0
Transportation	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	100.0
School Board Matters	8.0	18.2	38.4	35.4	0.0	100.0

treasurer, Table XXV shows that in some areas a substantial amount came from the chairman and committee members. In the area of staff personnel the greatest amount of information came from the superintendent. He contributed 42.3, while the chairman and secretary-treasurer contributed 22.0 and 13.0 per cent respectively. Most of the information in the pupil personnel area came from the school committee members who contributed 54.5 per cent. The superintendent and secretary-treasurer followed with 27.3 and 18.2 per cent respectively. The instructional program received 48.6 from the superintendent, 24.3 per cent from the chairman, and 18.9 per cent from the secretary-treasurer. Unlike the last district, the area of business management and accounting was dominated by the secretary-treasurer who gave 63.6 per cent. The superintendent in this case gave 22.7 per cent and pre-meeting documents contained 9.1 per cent. Buildings, property, and maintenance got an equal amount, 25 per cent, from each of the superintendent, chairman, and committee members. Transportation and school board matters received most information from the secretary-treasurer who contributed 46.7 and 40.0 per cent respectively to these two areas. These two areas also received 26.7 and 18.2 respectively from the chairman and the area of school board matters got 20.0 per cent from the school committee.

Opinion pattern. The pattern of opinion by operational area in this district, as shown in Table XXVI, is similar to the last district in that all areas received the most opinion from the chairman and school committee. The respective percentages received from these two sources as a group in each of the seven operational areas, starting

TABLE XXV

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 2 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Spurces	Totals
Staff Personnel	2.3	42.3	13.0	22.0	0.0	9.8	10.6	100.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	18.2	27.3	0.0	0.0	54.5	0.0	100.0
Instructional Program	5.4	48.6	18.9	24.3	0.0	2.8	0.0	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	9.1	22.7	63.6	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	12.5	25.0	12.5	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
Transportation	13.3	0.0	46.7	26.7	0.0	13.3	0.0	100.0
School Board Matters	9.1	12.7	40.0	18.2	0.0	20.0	0.0	100.0

TABLE XXVI

OPINION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 2 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	16.8	4.3	19.9	58.4	0.6	100.0
Pupil Personnel	8.9	14.7	38.2	38.2	0.0	100.0
Instructional Program	19.2	15.4	42.3	23.1	0.0	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	33.3	16.7	25.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	9.5	9.6	19.0	61.9	0.0	100.0
Transportation	0.0	22.3	33.3	44.4	0.0	100.0
School Board Matters	5.0	40.0	25.0	30.0	0.0	100.0

with staff personnel, were 78.3, 76.4, 65.4, 50.0, 80.9, 77.7, and 55.0.
Only in business management and accounting were substantial contri-
butions made by some other sources. In business management and
accounting, the superintendent gave 33.3 per cent of the opinion,
while in school board matters the secretary-treasurer contributed
40 per cent.

District 3

Information pattern. Table XXVII shows that in two of the five
operational areas in which information was received, more information
came from the elected members and "other sources" as a group than
came from the professional sources. In the staff personnel area 73.6
per cent of the information came from these former sources, while
in buildings, property, and maintenance 61.0 per cent of the infor-
mation was their contribution. The heaviest contributor in both of
these areas was "other sources", namely a salary negotiating committee
in the staff personnel area and a group of architects in the buildings
area. However, in the area of pupil personnel, the professional
sources accounted for 75.0 per cent of the information. The area of
business management and accounting got by far the most information
from the secretary-treasurer who contributed 51.6 per cent of all
information in this area. School board matters received a consider-
able amount of information from all sources, but the heaviest contri-
butors were the chairman with 31.6 per cent, the secretary-treasurer
with 26.3 per cent, and the superintendent with 18.4 per cent.

Opinion pattern. As Table XXVIII indicates, most of the opinion
received by every operational area in district 3 came from the elected

TABLE XXVII

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 3 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	0.0	19.8	6.6	25.2	1.2	3.8	43.4	100.0
Pupil Personnel	28.3	40.0	6.7	10.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	100.0
Instructional Program	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business Management and Accounting	12.9	14.5	51.6	12.9	3.3	4.8	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	6.9	25.9	6.2	13.8	0.8	3.3	43.1	100.0
Transportation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
School Board Matters	14.5	18.4	26.3	31.6	0.0	9.2	0.0	100.0

TABLE XXVIII

OPINION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 3 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	4.6	1.5	42.3	8.7	42.9	100.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Instructional Program	25.0	4.6	24.1	46.3	0.0	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	25.8	19.4	16.1	38.7	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	27.2	11.3	13.2	28.1	20.2	100.0
Transportation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
School Board Matters	15.5	17.8	30.0	36.7	0.0	100.0

members combined with "other sources". Specifically, these sources

accounted for 93.9 per cent of the opinion in staff personnel, 70.4 in

the area of the instructional program, 54.8 in business management

and accounting, 61.5 per cent in buildings, property and maintenance

and 66.7 per cent in the area of school board matters. The only

operational areas that received a significant contribution from the

professional sources were the instructional program that received 25.0

per cent from the superintendent, business management and accounting

where 25.8 and 19.4 respectively came from the superintendent and

secretary-treasurer, and buildings, property and maintenance where

27.2 per cent was received from the superintendent.

District 4

Information pattern. The extensive pre-meeting preparation in

this district is reflected in all operational areas receiving a sub-

stantial percentage of information from this source. While it was

not always the largest contributor, Table XXIX shows that it ranked

among the top three in all operational areas. The area of instruc-

tional personnel received 29.2 per cent from this source as well as

37.5 from the superintendent and 14.6 per cent each from the chairman

and board members. Like districts 1 and 2, most of the information

on pupil personnel came from trustees who gave 54.5 per cent of the

total, while pre-meeting documents and the secretary-treasurer supplied

13.6 per cent each. While the area of instructional personnel was

dominated by information from the superintendent, who contributed

60.9 per cent, pre-meeting documents, at 23.4 per cent, was the only

other source to supply a substantial amount in this area. Although

TABLE XXIX

INFORMATION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 4 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	29.2	37.5	4.1	14.6	14.6	0.0	100.0
Pupil Personnel	13.6	9.1	13.6	9.2	0.0	54.5	100.0
Instructional Program	23.9	60.9	2.2	6.5	2.2	4.3	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	25.6	11.6	18.6	11.6	25.5	7.1	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	19.4	21.1	18.9	14.3	15.4	10.9	100.0
Transportation	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
School Board Matters	36.1	2.9	22.2	19.4	19.4	0.0	100.0

the information received in business management and accounting and
buildings, property and maintenance was quite evenly distributed among
all sources, pre-meeting documents giving 25.6 per cent and the
trustees giving 25.5 per cent contributed the most in the former
while the superintendent and pre-meeting documents giving 21.1 and
19.4 per cent respectively, were the highest contributors in the
latter. Transportation received 50 per cent from each of pre-meeting
documents and the secretary-treasurer, while school board matters
got 36.1 per cent from pre-meeting documents, 22.2 per cent from the
secretary-treasurer and 19.4 per cent each from the chairman and
trustees.

All operational areas except pupil personnel received the majority
of their information from the "professional sources" which included
the pre-meeting documents, the superintendent and secretary-treasurer.
The percentages received from these sources for the seven opera-
tional areas starting with staff personnel were 70.8, 36.3, 87.0, 55.8,
59.4, 100, and 61.2.

Opinion pattern. Table XXX shows that all operational areas got
most opinion from the elected officials. The percentage of information
received from these sources are: staff personnel--63.2, pupil person-
nel--100,[2] instructional program--69.7, business management and
accounting--75.8, buildings, property and maintenance--76.4, trans-
portation--100, and school board matters--76.9. Only in the area of
staff personnel and the instructional program were there substantial

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[2]Includes 40.0 per cent from other sources.

TABLE XXX

OPINION PATTERNS BY OPERATIONAL AREA FOR DISTRICT 4 IN PERCENTAGE FORM

Operational Areas	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	36.8	0.0	15.8	47.4	0.0	100.0
Pupil Personnel	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	40.0	100.0
Instructional Program	30.3	0.0	24.2	45.5	0.0	100.0
Business Management and Accounting	15.2	9.0	9.1	66.7	0.0	100.0
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	14.9	8.9	17.6	58.8	0.0	100.0
Transportation	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
School Board Matters	15.4	7.7	23.1	53.8	0.0	100.0

contributions from other sources. The superintendent contributed 36.8 per cent to the former area and 30.3 per cent to the latter.

Summary

The purpose of part IV of the present chapter was to show where each operational area received its information and opinion in each of the four districts. These data are summarized in Table XXXI which gives the most important contributors of information in each operational area and in Table XXXII which gives the most important contributors of opinion in each operational area.

Contribution of information by operational area. Table XXXI shows that all operational areas received the most information from three sources: the superintendents, the secretary-treasurers, and the chairmen. The area of pupil personnel received important contributions of information from the superintendents in all districts and from the chairmen and "other sources" in two districts. The pupil personnel area got important contributions from the superintendents in three districts and from board members in two districts. The area of the instructional program got important contributions from the superintendents in four districts as well as the chairmen in three districts. In four districts the area of business management and accounting got large contributions from the secretary-treasurers. This area also received large contributions from the superintendents and pre-meeting documents in three of the districts. The buildings, property, and maintenance area received large contributions from the superintendents and chairmen in three districts while the area of transportation got important contributions from the secretary-treasurers

TABLE XXXI

SUMMARY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS OF INFORMATION IN EACH OPERATIONAL AREA

Contributors of Opinion	Staff Personnel	Pupil Personnel	Instructional Program	Business Management and Accounting	Buildings, Property and Maintenance	Transportation	School Board Matters
Pre-meeting Documents	1	1	2	3	1	1	1
Superintendents	4	3	4	3	3	2	2
Secretary-Treasurers	1	1	2	4	2	3	4
Chairmen	2	1	3	1	3	1	4
Committees	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Board Members	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
Other Sources	2	1	0	0	2	0	0

NOTE: The figures in this table indicate the number of districts in which the opinion, received in an operational area, was one of the three top contributions of a source. Thus, a figure of 4 means that in all districts the information, which was received in an operational area, was one of the three top contributions of that source.

in three districts. In all districts the area of school board matters received important contributions from the secretary-treasurers and the chairmen.

Contribution of opinion by operational area. Table XXXII shows that all operational areas received the most opinion from the trustees and chairmen. The area of staff personnel got important contributions from these two sources in all districts as well as from the superintendents in three districts. While the area of pupil personnel did not receive much opinion, the most important contributions came from the trustees in three districts and from the chairmen and "other sources" in two districts. All districts received important contributions of opinion in the area of the instructional program from the superintendents, the board members and the chairmen. The business management and accounting area received large contributions of opinion from the trustees and superintendents in all districts and from the secretary-treasurers and chairmen in three districts. In the area of buildings, property and maintenance the trustees made important contributions of opinion in all districts and the superintendents and chairmen made important contributions in three districts. The transportation area received little opinion, but the most important contributors were the board members in three districts and the secretary-treasurers in two. The area of school board matters received important contributions in all districts from the secretary-treasurers, board members and the chairmen.

TABLE XXXII

SUMMARY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS OF OPINION IN EACH OPERATIONAL AREA

Contributors of Opinion	Staff Personnel	Pupil Personnel	Instructional Program	Business Management and Accounting	Buildings, Property and Maintenance	Transportation	School Board Matters
Superintendents	3	0	4	4	3	0	0
Secretary-Treasurers	0	1	0	3	1	2	4
Chairmen	4	2	4	3	3	1	4
Board Members	4	3	4	4	4	3	4
Other Sources	1	2	0	0	2	1	0

NOTE: The figures in the table indicate the number of districts in which the opinion, received in an operational area, was one of the three top contributions of a source. Thus, a figure 4 means that in all districts the information which was received in an operational area, was one of three top contributions of that source.

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CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary purpose of this study was to gain insight into the decision-making process of school boards. The particular aspect of decision-making which was investigated was the flow of information to the decision-makers. Both the nature and extent of preparation for meetings as well as the flow of information and opinion to board members during the course of the meeting were studied. The source from which the information came and the operational area into which the information was presented were also investigated.

The sample consisted of the boards of four districts; each was a different size and type. There was a town district serving approximately 1200 students, a county serving 2300 students, a small urban district serving about 6200, and a large urban district which served over 60,000 students.

Two methods were employed to collect the data for the study:

1. Each school board office was visited by the investigator. Using a questionnaire as a guide, the superintendent was interviewed. In this manner information was obtained on the general operation of each board as well as the nature and extent of pre-meeting preparations, and

2. Previously recorded tapes were used to determine the extent of information and opinion reaching the board during the meetings. Information and opinion were classified by source as well as operational area.

The data were transformed into percentages, and patterns of information and opinion were obtained for: (1) each district by source, (2) each source within a district, (3) each district by operational area, and (4) each operational area within a district.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

General Board Operation

Number and length of meetings. The number of public meetings held by the participating boards ranged from 1.2 to 2.2 meetings per month, while the number of committee-of-the-whole meetings ranged from zero in the county to two in the two urban systems. The combined length of the meetings per month for the participating districts were 6.6 hours for the county, 8.5 hours for the large urban district, 9.25 hours for the small urban district, and 10.6 hours for the town district. Thus, the smallest district, the town, spent the longest time in meetings, while the largest district spent less time in meetings than either the small urban district or the town district.

Use of committees. Two of the four participating districts made extensive use of committees. Four standing committees and four special committees were in existence in the town district at the time of the study. At the same time, three standing committees and one special committee were being used in the small urban district. A minor role was played by committees in the county, which had, at the time of the study, one standing committee that met annually and one special committee. No committees were being used in the large urban district.

Pre-meeting Preparation

Documents reaching trustees prior to the meeting. More extensive preparation for board meetings was evident than was revealed by previous Canadian studies. All board members received the minutes of the previous meeting, three out of four boards received the agenda, two out of three received a list of accounts payable, and one board of trustees received the administrator's recommendations on agenda items in advance of the meeting. All boards received enclosures related to agenda items, but there was considerable variation in the number and types of enclosures.

While all administrations were making a deliberate effort to prepare trustees for board meetings, a great deal of variation among the boards in the amount of preparation existed. The trustees of the large urban district received the most comprehensive documents prior to the meeting and appeared to be as well prepared as the literature indicated they should. They received the minutes, the agenda, the administrator's recommendations, and specially-prepared enclosures on which the recommendations were based. While extensive pre-meeting preparation of the agenda, recommendations and background material was evident in the county, they were not mailed to the school committee members prior to the meeting as the literature suggested. They did, however, receive the minutes, a list of accounts payable, and reports on topics requiring extended information. The small urban district prepared and sent out the minutes, the agenda, a list of accounts payable, and copies of correspondence relating to agenda items. The town district which did the least preparing for

meetings sent out the minutes, the agenda, and occasionally some enclosures. The real weakness in preparing for meetings in the last two districts, as was indicated in the literature, was that the administrator's recommendations and the background information on which the recommendations were based were neither in writing nor did they reach the trustees prior to the meeting.

Relationship between amount of pre-meeting preparation, length of meetings, and size of systems. The smallest district did the least pre-meeting preparation, while the largest system did the most preparing for meetings. It was also the smallest district that spent the most time in meetings per month and only one district, the county, spent less time in meetings than the largest system. The relatively little time spent in meetings by the county may have been due to the fact that the superintendent presented his recommendations and background information in writing during the meeting rather than verbally as was done in the small urban district. By having the recommendations in writing, the trustees could "read ahead" during lulls in the meeting, thereby preparing themselves for discussion and thus, saving time.

Relationship between number of committees and length of meetings. The two districts, the town district and the small urban district, which made the most extensive use of committees spent more time in meetings than the districts that made little or no use of committees. Generally, committees appeared to use time in two main ways: (1) by presenting lengthy oral committee reports, and (2) time was spent deciding whether a matter should be dealt with by a committee or by

the whole board.

Extent of Information and Opinion

Extent of information. During the course of the meetings under
study, the small urban district received information 510 times, while
the town district received 491 instances. At the same time, the large
urban system received considerably fewer instances with 372 and the
county received fewer still with 298. The number of instances of
information which were received appeared to be related to the degree
of pre-meeting preparation; the trustees of the large urban district
and the school committee of the county, which were the most adequately
prepared received fewer instances of information since each instance
tended to be more comprehensive and to the point, while the instances
received by the least adequately prepared districts were brief and
sometimes off topic.

Extent of opinion. The pattern of opinion among the boards
paralleled that of the information. Boards of trustees that received
the most information also received the most opinion and those that
received the least information also received the least opinion. The
difference that was found was that the boards that received the most
information tended to get more instances of opinion proportionately
than information, while those that received the least information
tended to get less opinion proportionately than information. This
also appeared to be related to pre-meeting preparation since the
districts that were the most adequately prepared for the meeting,
namely the county and the large urban district, received fewer
instances of opinion than information, while those that were the least

adequately prepared prior to the meeting received more instances of opinion than information.

Patterns of Information and Opinion by Source and Operational Area

Overall pattern of information by source. Generally, the most productive sources of information were the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, and the chairman, although there was some variation among the districts. The town district's three most productive sources were the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, and other sources; the county's most productive sources were the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, and the chairman; the small urban district got most information from "other sources", the superintendent, and the chairman; and the large urban district received most from the superintendent, pre-meeting documents, and the board members. The one most important overall source of information was the superintendent.

Patterns of information by each source for all districts together. Although there was some variation as to where each source supplied information in each of the districts, a general pattern for each source for all districts was obtained. Pre-meeting documents contained information mainly in the area of staff personnel, building, property and maintenance, and school board matters. The superintendent's information pattern was very similar, since he supplied most of his information in staff personnel, buildings, property, and maintenance, and the instructional program. The secretary-treasurer's most productive areas were school board matters, business management and accounting, and staff personnel. The chairman and the trustees gave

most of their information in staff personnel, buildings, property, and maintenance, and school board matters, while committees were most productive in buildings, property, and maintenance. "Other sources" confined their information-giving to staff personnel, pupil personnel, and buildings, property, and maintenance.

Overall pattern of opinion by source. Although most of the information tended to come from the professional sources, the majority of the opinion came from the trustees and the chairman. Two sources, however, the chairman and the superintendent, were productive in both information and opinion. The town district received most of its opinion from the trustees and the chairman, while half of the opinion given in the county came from the school committee members. Also giving substantial amounts of opinion in the county were the chairman and the superintendent. In the small urban district the chairman, followed by the trustees and other sources were the three most productive sources of opinion. The large urban district got more than half of its opinion from the trustees with the remainder coming almost entirely from the superintendent and chairman.

Pattern of opinion by each source for all districts together. Each of the sources were inclined to give most of their opinion in the same areas in which they gave most of their information. The superintendent gave the bulk of his opinion in the identical areas in which he gave the most information--staff personnel, instructional program, and buildings, property, and maintenance. The secretary-treasurer deviated slightly from his information pattern by giving most opinion in buildings, property and maintenance instead of staff personnel,

but was still productive in two of the same areas, business management

and accounting and school board matters. The chairman also varied

slightly by giving opinion in more districts in the instructional

program instead of buildings, property and maintenance, but remained

the same in staff personnel and school board matters. Board member

opinion was fairly evenly divided among all operational areas, but

they gave the most opinion in staff personnel and buildings, property

and maintenance. The only productive area for opinion from "other

sources" was buildings, property, and maintenance.

Overall pattern of information by operational area. Approximately

one-half of all information given at the two board meetings was given

in two operational areas, staff personnel and buildings, property, and

maintenance. Very little information was received in the areas of

pupil personnel and transportation. The instructional program and

business management and accounting received approximately one-tenth

of all information given in each district, while the amount received

in the area of school board matters in each of the districts varied

from about 5 to 19 per cent. Only one district, the county, got more

than half of its information in the "educational" areas of staff

personnel, pupil personnel, and the instructional program. The rest

of the districts got most of their information in the "business" areas.

Patterns of information for each operational area for all

districts together. The area of staff personnel received most informa-

tion from the superintendent. In the area of pupil personnel, no

one source contributed in all districts, but the greatest contributors

in this area were the superintendent, secretary-treasurer, and board

members. The instructional program received the greatest amount of information from the superintendent as well as receiving a substantial amount from the chairman. Business management and accounting received most information from the secretary-treasurer, with the superintendent and chairman also contributing heavily. Buildings, property, and maintenance got most information from the superintendent and chairman, while transportation had the secretary-treasurer as the most important contributor. Finally, in the area of school board matters, the secretary-treasurer and chairman made the greatest contribution of information.

Overall pattern of opinion by operational area. The overall distribution of opinion by operational area was not unlike the overall distributions of information. About 60 per cent of the total opinion given fell into two operational areas, staff personnel and buildings, property and maintenance. Very little opinion was given in the area of transportation. Pupil personnel received about 10 per cent of the opinion in two districts, while the remaining areas received an average of approximately 10 per cent per area per district. Two districts, the county and the small urban districts, got over half of their opinion in the "educational" areas.

Patterns of opinion for each operational area for all districts together. Since it has already been shown in the patterns of information by sources that the professional source gave most of the information and the chairman and trustee gave most of the opinion, the opinion pattern for each operational area has to differ from the information pattern for that operational area. Staff personnel got

most opinion from the chairman and board members; pupil personnel
received most opinion from the trustees, the chairman and the super-
intendent; business management and accounting received most opinion
from the superintendent and trustees; buildings, property, and
maintenance and transportation received most from the trustees; and
school board matters got most opinion from the secretary-treasurer,
the chairman, and the board of trustees.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In Relation to General Board Operation

1. The length of time spent in meetings in these districts
   was not related to the size of the system.

Generally, it has been felt that the bigger the school system,
the greater number of hours must be spent in meetings. This was not,
however, true of the districts in this study. The smallest district
in this study spent more time in meetings than any other district and
the largest district was one of the districts spending the least time
in meetings. It would appear, therefore, that the amount of time
spent in meetings is related to other factors.

2. Organization of the board into committees still characterizes
   some school boards.

While some school districts are heeding the advice of the
authorities and operating without committees, some districts continue
to use committees. Two of the four boards under study used a great
number of committees which did the work which is normally done by
administrators who are trained in administering organizations.

3. <u>The districts that made extensive use of committees were</u>
   <u>the districts that spent the greatest number of hours per</u>
   <u>month in meetings.</u>

This is not meant to imply that committee organization is the
only factor which increases the length of board meetings. However,
it is conceivable that if committees with their characteristic oral
reports are used extensively, they can occupy a great deal of meeting
time.

4. <u>The role of the trustees and the role of the superintendent</u>
   <u>in some districts needs re-assessment.</u>

The literature suggested that one of the primary functions of
the superintendent should be that of analyzing and presenting informa-
tion to trustees, while the trustees chief function should be to
sit in judgment of the information and proposals. Since this study
revealed that this was the case in only one jurisdiction, a change
in this direction is desirable.

In Relation to Pre-meeting Preparation

1. <u>All administrations participating in the study were putting</u>
   <u>forth some effort to prepare trustees more adequately for</u>
   <u>decision-making.</u>

Previous studies have indicated that the amount of pre-meeting
preparation of school trustees is negligible. However, the adminis-
trators of all of the participating districts were sending the basic
documents such as the agenda and minutes to trustees prior to
meetings. This at least had the effect of precipitating some general
thinking by trustees in the areas in which decisions were to be made.

Most of the districts were going beyond the basic documents and one district in particular, the large urban system, was doing everything that the literature suggested. This included supplying trustees not only with the agenda, but the administrator's recommended courses of action as well as background information supporting the recommendations.

2. <u>The school boards that were the most adequately prepared for meetings spent the least number of hours in meetings per month.</u>

While this could be a causal relationship, there are other factors such as the existence or non-existence of policies which could have caused meeting time to be longer in some districts and shorter in others. However, it does seem reasonable to assume that extensive pre-meeting preparation could reduce meeting time since trustees have thought through and evaluated the possible solutions prior to the meeting. This would not only shorten discussion during the meeting, but it would also keep the discussion closer to the topic.

<u>In Relation to the Provision of Information and Opinion During Board Meetings</u>

1. <u>The three most important sources of information of the boards in the study were the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer, and the chairman, while the three most important sources of opinion were the board members, the chairman, and superintendent.</u>

In general, the professional sources provided the information, while the chairman and trustees provided the opinion. Thus, it would appear that the boards in this study are sitting in judgment of the

information and proposals presented to them by the administrations as the literature suggests they should. The weakness with the _modus operandi_ of some of the boards is that the administrators are not providing enough information soon enough. On the basis of this study it would appear that they are not providing comprehensive informational documents in sufficient time before the meeting to enable trustees to evaluate the information and the suggested course of action.

    2. <u>Boards are spending more of their meeting time on problems related to business administration than they are on problems related to the educational aspect of district operation.</u>

Although all of the boards in the study spent considerable time discussing matters in the area of staff personnel which is largely in the educational area, the combined total of information received in business management and accounting, buildings, property, and maintenance, transportation, and school board matters was considerably more than half of all information received in three of the four districts.

    3. <u>With respect to the provision of information and opinion, there was not a clear business-education dichotomy between the superintendent and secretary-treasurer.</u>

The superintendent, in many cases, was supplying substantial amounts of information in areas which have traditionally been considered the secretary-treasurer's responsibility. For example, the superintendent was an important source of information in some districts in business management and accounting and in all districts he was an

important contributor in the area of buildings, property, and mainten-
ance. Furthermore, the superintendent in all districts contributed
more information generally than the secretary-treasurer did. Thus,
it seems that the superintendent is beginning to operate in areas
formerly dominated by the secretary-treasurer, who for many years
as was suggested in Chapter III, has performed functions beyond the
legal definition of his duties.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

One major recommendation follows from the review of the literature
and the findings of this study. The literature suggested that one of
the primary functions of administrators and particularly the superin-
tendent should be that of supplying the board with information and
recommendations, while the role of the board should be to assess the
information and pass judgment on the recommendations. The findings,
however, show that not all administrators are supplying adequate
amounts of information to their boards and furthermore, some of the
boards do not perceive their role as only that of judges of information
and recommendations, but in some instances act like administrators when
they supply information and carry out other administrative tasks
through the use of committees. It is, therefore, recommended that
school boards and their superintendents reassess the role to be played
by each group. The complexity of modern-day decisions on educational
matters requires large amounts of information which must be gathered
and analyzed by educators trained in school administration and,
therefore, this is seen as the direction the role of the superintendent

should take. On the other hand, the trustees should sit in judgment

of the information and proposals advanced by the superintendent.

This recommendation has implications not only for school boards

and superintendents, who must assess their respective roles, but

also for the Department of Education and the Alberta School Trustees

Association. Heretofore, the Department of Education has felt that

the primary function of the superintendent was that of supervision.

He was considered to be the instructional leader in his jurisdiction,

spending a good deal of time in assisting teachers in instructional

matters. It is suggested that since widespread use is being made

of supervisors of instruction who can assume some of these supervisory

duties, an ideal opportunity is available for superintendents to

direct more of their energies toward administrative tasks. While

there are many administrative tasks in which the superintendent can

engage himself, this study suggests that one of the most important of

these tasks is that of supplying their boards with adequate infor-

mation on which to base decisions. Greater dividends to the school

system as a whole may accrue as a result of superintendents deploying

their talents in this direction. To accomplish this change, though,

the leadership and encouragement of the Department of Education are

required. Continued in-service education for trustees by the

Alberta School Trustees Association in the use of Davies-Brickell

procedures will also assist in accomplishing this end.

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APPENDICES

A P P E N D I X   A

INSTRUMENT USED FOR COLLECTING DATA ON GENERAL SCHOOL
BOARD OPERATION AND PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT USED FOR COLLECTING DATA ON GENERAL
SCHOOL BOARD OPERATION AND PRE_MEETING
PREPARATION

1. General Board Operation.

    (a) How many pupils did your district serve in 1966-67?_____

    (b) How many public meetings does your board hold regularly

        each month?   1   2   3   4

    (c) How many hours per month on the average does your board

        meet in public sessions? _____

    (d) How many closed-session meetings (committee-of-the-whole)

        on the average does your board have during the year?_____

    (e) How many hours per month on the average would your board

        meet in closed sessions? _____

    (f) List the Standing Committees of the board.

        (i)   _____

        (ii) _____

        (iii) _____

        (iv) _____

        (v)   _____

        (vi) _____

        (vii) _____

        (viii)_____

        (ix) _____

        (x)   _____

2.   Structuring of Meetings.

(a) Does the administrative staff distribute <u>in advance</u> of your

meetings the following documents?

	every meeting	most meetings	some meetings	few meetings	no meetings
(i) minutes of the previous meeting.					
(ii) monthly financial statement.					
(iii) list of accounts payable					
(iv) agenda of the forth-coming meeting.					
(v) administrative staff memorandum					
(vi) background material (reports, letters) on agenda items.					

(b) How long in advnace of the meeting are these materials

distributed?

	day of meeting	1 day	2 days	more than two days
(i) minutes of the previous meeting.				
(ii) monthly financial statement.				
(iii) lists of accounts payable.				
(iv) agenda of the forth-coming meeting.				
(v) administrator's recom-mended courses of action on agenda items				
(vi) background material (reports, letters) on agenda items.				

(c) Who compiles these materials?

	Superin-tendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Joint Sec-retary-Treasurer and Supt.	Others (fill in)
(i) minutes of the previous meeting.				
(ii) monthly financial statement.				
(iii) list of accounts payable.				
(iv) agenda of the forth-coming meeting.				
(v) administrator's recom-mended courses of action on agenda items.				
(vi) Background material (reports, letters) on agenda items				

A P P E N D I X   B

RAW DATA DERIVED FROM THE TAPE RECORDINGS

RAW INFORMATION DATA ON DISTRICT 1

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
				Source				
Staff Personnel	4	37	9	8	17	12	0	87
Pupil Personnel	0	14	7	10	0	8	3	42
Instructional Program	1	31	5	6	0	5	0	48
Business Management and Accounting	0	13	6	5	1	3	0	28
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	0	23	45	25	7	18	77	195
Transportation	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	10
School Board Matters	4	19	27	20	1	9	1	81
Totals	9	141	105	74	26	55	81	491

RAW OPINION DATA ON DISTRICT 1

Operational Areas	Source					
	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	15	5	27	57	0	104
Pupil Personnel	5	0	13	15	13	46
Instructional Program	8	2	22	11	0	43
Business Management and Accounting	5	5	19	21	0	50
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	8	21	66	50	57	202
Transportation	0	2	0	4	2	8
School Board Matters	8	18	38	35	0	99
Totals	49	53	185	193	72	552

RAW INFORMATION DATA ON DISTRICT 2

Operational Areas	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurer	Source Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	3	52	16	27	0	12	13	123
Pupil Personnel	0	4	6	0	0	12	0	22
Instructional Program	2	18	7	9	0	1	0	37
Business Management and Accounting	2	5	14	1	0	0	0	22
Buildings, property and Maintenance	3	6	3	6	0	6	0	24
Transportation	2	0	7	4	0	2	0	15
School Board Matters	5	7	22	10	0	11	0	55
Totals	17	92	75	57	0	44	13	298

RAW OPINION DATA FOR DISTRICT 2

Operational Area	Source					
	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	27	7	32	94	1	161
Pupil Personnel	3	5	13	13	0	34
Instructional Program	5	4	11	6	0	26
Business Management and Accounting	4	2	3	3	0	12
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	2	2	4	13	0	21
Transportation	0	2	3	4	0	9
School Board Matters	1	8	5	6	0	20
Totals	42	30	71	139	1	283

RAW INFORMATION DATA ON DISTRICT 3

Operational Areas	Source							
	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	0	36	12	46	2	7	79	182
Pupil Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructional Program	17	24	4	6	0	9	0	60
Business Management and Accounting	8	9	32	8	2	3	0	62
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	9	33	8	18	1	5	56	130
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Board Matters	11	14	20	24	0	7	0	76
Totals	45	116	76	102	5	31	135	510

RAW OPINION DATA ON DISTRICT 3

Operational Area	Source					
	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	16	5	146	30	148	345
Pupil Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructional Program	27	5	26	50	0	108
Business Management and Accounting	16	12	10	24	0	62
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	31	13	15	32	23	114
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Board Matters	14	16	27	33	0	90
Totals	104	51	224	169	171	719

RAW INFORMATION DATA FOR DISTRICT 4

Operational Area		Source						
	Pre-meeting Documents	Superintendents	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Committees	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	14	18	2	7	0	7	0	48
Pupil Personnel	3	2	3	2	0	0	12	22
Instructional Program	11	28	1	3	0	1	2	46
Business Management and Accounting	11	5	8	5	0	11	3	43
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	34	37	33	25	0	27	19	175
Transportation	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
School Board Matters	13	1	8	7	0	7	0	36
Totals	87	91	56	49	0	53	36	372

RAW OPINION DATA FOR DISTRICT 4

Operational Area	Source					
	Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer	Chairman	Board Members	Other Sources	Totals
Staff Personnel	7	0	3	9	0	19
Pupil Personnel	0	0	0	3	2	5
Instructional Program	10	0	8	15	0	33
Business Management and Accounting	5	3	3	22	0	33
Buildings, Property and Maintenance	22	13	26	87	0	148
Transportation	0	0	0	2	0	2
School Board Matters	2	1	3	7	0	13
Totals	46	17	43	145	2	253

A P P E N D I X   C

DAVIES – BRICKELL BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

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A. Call to order

B. Recommended actions

    1. Routine matters

        a. Approval of minutes

        b. Approval of Treasurer's Report

    2. Old business

    3. New business

C. Information and proposals

    1. From delegations

    2. From non-staff communications and reports

    3. From the superintendent and staff

    4. From questions asked of, and by, board members

D. Future business

    1. Meeting dates

    2. Preview of topics for future agendas

    3. General discussion to guide future recommendations

E. Adjournment